

In pandemic, word definitions shift and new lexicon emerges

By **MATT SEDENSKY**

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Newscasts bring word of "hot zones" and "lock-downs." Conversations are littered with talk of "quarantines" and "isolation." Leaders urge "social distancing" and "sheltering in place" and "flattening the curve."

In an instant, our vocabulary has changed — just like everything else.

It seems like just days since people were looking up "caucus" for clarity on the American political process or "acquit" to decode the Senate's verdict in President Donald Trump's impeachment. Now, those turning to online dictionaries are parsing the difference between epidemics and pandemics, ventilators and respirators, seeking some black-and-white answers in the face of total uncertainty.

"Words matter," says John Kelly, a senior research editor at Dictionary.com.

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In this Wednesday, March 18, 2020 file photo, a sign reminding people about "social distancing" in the midst of the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak stands next to a roadway in North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Associated Press

Imports of medical supplies plummet as demand in U.S. soars

By **MARTHA MENDOZA and JULIET LINDERMAN**

The critical shortage of medical supplies across the U.S., including testing swabs, protective masks, surgical gowns and hand sanitizer, can be tied to a sudden drop in imports, mostly from China, The Associated Press has found.

Trade data shows the decline in shipments started in mid-February after the spiraling coronavirus outbreak in China led the country to shutter factories and disrupted ports. Some emergency rooms, hospitals and clinics in the U.S. have now run out of key medical supplies, while others are rationing personal protective equipment like gloves and masks.

The United States counts on receiving the vast majority of its medical supplies from China, where the coronavirus has infected more than 80,000 people and killed more than 3,200.

When Chinese medical supply factories began coming back on line last month, their first priority was their own hospitals. The government required makers of N95 masks to sell all or part of their production internally instead of shipping masks to the U.S.

The most recent delivery of medical-grade N95 masks arrived from China about a month ago, on Feb. 19. And as few as 13 shipments of non-medical N95 masks have arrived in the past month — half as many as arrived the same month last year. N95 masks are used in industrial settings, as well as hospitals, and filter out 95% of all airborne particles, including ones too tiny to be blocked by regular masks.

Governors across the country are becoming panicked as states run out of equipment. President Donald Trump has urged them to buy masks on the open market, but few if any are available.

"Without adequate pro-



In this March 17, 2020, photo, Theresa Malijan, a registered nurse, has hand sanitizer applied on her hands after removing her gloves after she took a nasopharyngeal swab from a patient at a drive-through COVID-19 testing station for University of Washington Medicine patients in Seattle.

Associated Press

tection, more of our hospital staff could become ill, which would mean there wouldn't be people to care for patients," said Nancy

Foster, the American Hospital Association's vice president of quality and patient safety policy.

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Trump vs Fauci: President and doctor spar over unproven drug

By **RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In an extraordinary exchange, President Donald Trump and the government's top infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, publicly sparred Friday on whether a malaria drug would work to treat people with coronavirus disease.

The scene played out on national television during the daily White House briefing on the outbreak. Anxious for answers, Americans heard conflicting ones from a just-the-facts scientist and a president who operates on gut instinct.

Reporters asked both men — first Fauci then Trump — if a malaria drug called hydroxychloroquine could be used to prevent COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus. A day earlier, when Fauci wasn't with him at that briefing, Trump had called attention to the drug.

On Friday, Fauci took the reporter's question and got right to the point.

"No," he said. "The answer ... is no."

"The information that you're referring to specifically is anecdotal," Fauci added firmly. "It was not done in a controlled clinical trial, so you really can't make any definitive statement about it."

He went on to explain that the Food and Drug Admin-



President Donald Trump listens as Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr. Anthony Fauci speaks during a coronavirus task force briefing at the White House, Friday, March 20, 2020, in Washington.

istration is looking for a way to make the drug available for emergency use, but in a manner that gives the government data about whether it's safe and effective. Fauci is director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at NIH and in more than 30 years has handled HIV, SARS, MERS, Ebola and now the new coronavirus. Currently, there is no medicine specifically approved for treating COVID-19. But Trump stuck to what his gut was telling him. As the two men took turns at the podium, Trump said he dis-

agreed with the notion that there is no magic drug for the coronavirus disease. "Maybe and maybe not," he said. "Maybe there is, maybe there isn't. We have to see." He struck an upbeat note, while trying not to directly challenge Fauci. "I think without seeing too much, I'm probably more of a fan of that," he said, referring to the malaria drug. "And we all understand what the doctor said is 100% correct." Then the president added, "It's a strong drug. So, we'll see."

Hydroxychloroquine and a similar drug — chloroquine — are sold around the world under a variety of brand and generic names. They can be prescribed off-label by doctors in the United States. They may interfere with the coronavirus being able to enter cells, and some scientists have reported possible encouraging signs in test-tube and other small studies. Other scientists are skeptical that those promising test-tube results will translate to benefits for patients. Fauci has a track record of being the fact-based

counterpoint to the Trump administration's upbeat assessments of the coronavirus outbreak. For much longer than that, he's specialized in the same calm and persistent repetition of the information he thinks his audience — whether the public or physicians — needs to know.

Weeks ago, after Fauci said that even with all deliberate speed a vaccine could take a year to 18 months, Trump told a political rally one could be ready "relatively soon."

As administration officials repeatedly assured the public that coronavirus tests were rapidly becoming available, Fauci at a congressional hearing said the lack of widespread testing was "a failing" of the system.

Although Fauci has publicly supported Trump's travel restrictions to try to keep the virus out, he warned the worst was coming even as Trump suggested the crisis was under good control.

Rather than fighting with Trump, he stepped up to the podium Friday to say he's not ruling the drug out, but that it must be studied before making any promises.

Trump wasn't dialing back his enthusiasm.

"Look, it may work and it may not work and I agree with the doctor," Trump said. "I feel good about it. That's all it is. □"

Associated Press

Army closing recruiting stations, moves effort online

By **ROBERT BURNS and LOLITA C. BALDOR**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The top Army officer said Friday that all of the service's recruiting stations are now closing, as the military takes more dramatic steps to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Gen. James McConville, chief of staff of the Army, told Pentagon reporters the service will move to "virtual" recruiting, wooing recruits more aggressively through a variety of social media sites and other on-



Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy, left, accompanied by Gen. James McConville, Chief of Staff of the Army, right, speaks at a news conference at U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command at Fort Detrick in Frederick, Md., Thursday, March 19, 2020, where scientists are working to help develop solutions to prevent, detect and treat the coronavirus.

Associated Press

line activities. He said the shutdown is "happening right now as we speak," and may continue through the weekend.

The move comes as the Army works to recover from recruiting shortfalls and struggles in recent years, prompting leaders to develop more programs to reach young people online.

Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said it's not yet clear how long the shutdown will last, saying the service will take things day by day. "It's all going to depend on

duration" of the new virus, he said, adding that the Army was having a good recruiting year so far.

The Army met its enlistment goal in 2019, after failing to hit recruiting numbers a year earlier, for the first time in 13 years.

The target goal for recruits was lowered from 76,500 in 2018 to about 68,000 last year.

Army leaders have increased the number of recruiters and beefed up efforts to connect with young people through online sports and similar events. □

Continued from front

"They provide comfort and order amid chaos. They provide solidarity in an age of social distancing."

A look at the fast-evolving lexicon of the coronavirus pandemic:

WARTIME METAPHORS

Trump, who spent weeks brushing off the severity of the crisis, is now touting himself as "a wartime president" leading the fight against the virus. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo is equating ventilators to "missiles" in the battle. French President Emmanuel Macron has bluntly declared: "We are at war."

Around the world, words typically used in relation to nuclear fallout, active shooters, deadly storms and war are now being deployed to discuss disease. John Baugh, a linguist at Washington University in St. Louis, says doctors are desperate to shake the public to attention, using metaphors they think can convey the seriousness of the problem. Politicians may be doing the same — or may be trying to capitalize on catastrophe.

"They're intended to grab attention, whether it's politically motivated or for some other reason," Baugh said.

SHIFTING DEFINITIONS

After the virus gripped China, onlookers saw a "lockdown" at the outbreak's epicenter of Wuhan, with public transit coming to a halt, monitors enforcing orders keeping people inside and officials going door-to-door searching for infected people to be forced into quarantines.

As COVID-19 moved west, though, the meaning of such terms has morphed, and leaders' definitions of disaster jargon has been as varied as the public's interpretations.

Cuomo, whose state has the largest number of virus cases in the U.S., created a "containment zone" in New Rochelle last week. Paired with an order dispatching the National Guard — though only for cleaning and food distribution — the phrase conjured images of mass quarantine even as businesses remained open and people were free to come and go.

Cuomo and New York City

Mayor Bill de Blasio have subsequently aired different messages on the possibility of more severe restrictions in the biggest American city, with the mayor urging residents to prepare to "shelter in place" and the governor criticizing the idea and the language. Cuomo has dismissed "shelter in place" as a relic of the Atomic Age, when people were trained to get to an interior windowless room until they got an "all clear" message.

"Now, that's not what people really mean, but that's what it sounds like," he said. "Communicate what you mean without using terms that nobody understands and only incites panic."

With people clamoring to know what's next, it's important that a San Francisco "shelter in place" not be confused with a Wuhan "lockdown," but it's hard to get the same message projected everywhere.

"People are using different terms somewhat interchangeably," said Dr. Irwin Redlener, an expert on disaster preparedness and public health at Columbia University. The tug-of-war over terminology echoes the patchwork of measures that state and local governments have taken, he said.

VIRUS VOCABULARY

Kathleen Hall Jamieson cringes when scientists toss out statements of "morbidity" and "mortality" in the same breath, when public officials warn of "asymptomatic" people posing a threat, and when news conferences are peppered with words like "vector" and "transmission."

"They are incomprehensible to many in the public," said the University of Pennsylvania communications expert, who co-edited "The Oxford Handbook of the Science of Science Communication."

"Public health officials," she said, "need to translate their technical language into intelligible language." That means saying something like "not showing any symptoms" instead of "asymptomatic," using simple verbs like "spread" versus "transmit," and opting for the clarity of "hand-washing" over "hygiene."

But Hall Jamieson marvels at how Dr. Anthony Fauci and others have managed to get the public to grasp a complicated medical concept with the phrase "flattening the curve," often accompanied by visual hand cues. And many see "social distancing" to be the greatest pandemic-era addition the vernacular yet — easily understood phrasing that's helped communicate to millions that they need to keep a safe berth to avoid spreading the virus.

"That's really taken off," says Eric Acton, a linguist at Eastern Michigan University, "and (it's) a term that probably will have a life that outlives this outbreak."

REBRANDING, OR SEEKING LEVITY

"We now have a name for the disease," the head of the World Health Organization, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, announced



In this Wednesday, March 18, 2020 file photo, a pedestrian walks past a COVID-19 testing sign at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Ill.

Associated Press

on Feb. 11, declaring it COVID-19.

It doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, and no obvious acronym like AIDS or SARS or MERS has arisen as a replacement.

Seeking to rebrand, Trump and his allies have taken to calling it the "Chinese virus," which many consider racist. Alaska Rep. Don Young played on the coronavirus'

linguistic similarity to a libation often consumed with a lime wedge, dismissing it as a "beer virus" overblown by media hysteria. And others bored with the limitations of COVID-19 and the even clunkier name of the virus that causes it — severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 — have come up with their own shorthand. □




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2020 campaigns go digital amid fears of coronavirus spread

By **BRIAN SLODYKO, ALEXANDRA JAFFE and ZEKE MILLER**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — No more rallies. No more door-knocking. And no more in-person fundraisers, raking in dollars from dozens of millionaires at once.

The coronavirus has disrupted American life, and the 2020 presidential campaign is no exception. Amid calls for social distancing to stop the pandemic's spread, President Donald Trump and Democrats Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders have had little choice but to call off large-scale public events in favor of politicking online and over the airwaves.

Gone are the rope lines, selfies with supporters and entourages of traveling press. They're being replaced — for now — with tools of the digital world: tele-town halls, virtual fundraisers and livestreamed speeches from candidates' homes, sometimes with awkward results.

The abrupt shift has infused the contest with an added degree of uncertainty.

With control of the White House at stake, candidates have been forced to ditch well-honed strategies in favor of untested tactics. There are doubts about whether they will be able to continue raising crucial cash as unemployment soars and the economy sputters. There are also concerns that a virtual campaign could foster the spread of misinformation and maybe even force the cancellation of the major party conventions this summer.

"Nobody's had to put together a general election strategy in the circumstances we face today," Anita Dunn, Biden's senior adviser, told The Associated Press. "I like to say every election is different. This election is really, really, really different."

Digital advertising and online outreach were always going to play a major role in the election. But no one could anticipate that tactile politics would be com-



In this image from video provided by BernieSanders.com, Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., speaks from Washington, Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

Associated Press

pletely put on hold.

Since events halted earlier this month, Sanders has held a virtual rally featuring rocker Neil Young and appeared via livestream for a "fireside chat." But any momentum he's sought to build has been sapped, as Biden, the former vice president, has won a string of contests that put the nomination within his grasp. Sanders' campaign did not respond to a request for comment.

The pause has provided Biden the opportunity to retool his campaign, which was running on fumes before his massive win in South Carolina last month reset the race. But he lacks the robust digital operation that Sanders and Trump have. And his early experiments in online campaigning have had mixed results. Biden aimed to appear presidential during a livestream Tuesday night, when he won primaries in Florida, Illinois and Arizona. Standing before a podium with an austere backdrop from his home state of Delaware, he called on the nation to put politics aside to fight the coronavirus because it "doesn't care if you're a Democrat or a Republican."

Yet an earlier event was marred by technical glitches. At one point, Biden wandered off-camera. The campaign later apologized for the difficulties, and Rob Flaherty, Biden's

digital director, acknowledged livestream technology is "one of the things that we're struggling with." "He's the best retail politician in the entire world, right? So how do we build systems where he can go out and meet people, still talk to people, get those one-on-one engagements, and also make people feel like they're a part of something?" Flaherty said.

The campaign is also looking into adopting the use of Slack, a popular group communication platform, now that staffers are working from home.

Trump, too, is not immune from the effects. Though the Republican has the megaphone of the presidency, his dismissive early response to the virus and denials that a pandemic was spreading have been largely panned.

At the same time, he's being denied the ability to hold the freewheeling rallies that are a staple of his presidency and that allow him to blow off steam, attack rivals and often shift the media narrative.

As campaign offices have emptied out and workers telecommute from home, trainings for his reelection effort are now being done virtually, as are all voter contacts.

Tim Murtaugh, the communications director for Trump's reelection campaign, said the campaign is "best equipped" for the

pivot to virtual campaigning. But no amount of technology can replicate the arena rallies that have served as mass organizing and communication events for his reelection.

Murtaugh said the campaign hopes to roll out "live and interactive" events with surrogates online in the coming days. Still, don't expect to see Trump participating in them.

Murtaugh said that as Trump and Vice President Mike Pence hold televised briefings daily, the campaign's role is to amplify their message.

"Americans want to see that their president and their government is on the case," he said.

While Biden has called for the country to come together for a moment of bipartisanship to address the crisis, other Democrats are itching to use Trump's handling of it as an election-year attack.

"Using Trump's own words and actions to remind people of his failures while he tries to rewrite history is essential," tweeted David Plouffe, Barack Obama's former campaign manager.

So far, at least, a political committee affiliated with Trump's reelection has opted against taking the same course. America First Action, a super PAC sanctioned by Trump, has postponed plans to spend millions attacking Biden in TV

ads while the crisis in ongoing.

Another area of uncertainty is whether any of the contenders will still be able to rake in gobs of money, the lifeblood of any campaign.

With big-dollar events on hold, the candidates and the parties could struggle to bring in large checks. The financial uncertainty could also depress grassroots donations from those who give small amounts online.

"We have to be thoughtful about how we ask people for money," Flaherty said. "We're moving into a space where the economy is going to be tougher."

Not everyone is concerned, though.

"Any Democratic Party official who's agonizing over what type of fundraising we do or what type of convention we're going to have should get out of group therapy, go to JoeBiden.com and make a donation," said Robert Zimmerman, a prominent New York donor and Democratic National Committee member who said he would be fine casting his ballot for Biden during a virtual convention. "The pandemic that we're facing and the threat it represents puts everything in the proper perspective."

But it's not just the presidential candidates who will have to grapple with this new reality. Down-ballot candidates could find the shift to an all-digital campaign particularly challenging because many of them are running on much thinner budgets and have less money to spend on ads and staff to make up for the loss of in-person interaction. "If you have no money, and you're dependent on meeting people out in organic environments, the challenges you now face are huge," said Kelly Dietrich, CEO of the National Democratic Training Committee, a group that trains Democrats who want to run for office or work on a campaign.

Even well-funded players in the presidential race are feeling the pinch. □

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Parents, police struggle to herd the young in virus outbreak

By **LEANNE ITALIE**
Associated Press

Teen: "I can't stay here all day. What about my friends!?"

Parent: "Are you kidding? This is serious!"

The adolescent brain is definitely in play as authorities around the globe struggle to keep young people from gathering, while parents fret at home about what they're up to as the coronavirus spreads.

"It's like herding chickens," said Southampton, New York, mom Anastasia Gavalas, with five of her own who range from 13 to 21. She spoke Tuesday, just two days into school closings that could last for weeks.

"They feel well and the weather has been nice so they think they can go and do anything. If they can climb over locked gates and play ball in the park, they will. If there's one store that's remained open, they'll find it and go in. No matter how much I ask, they're getting out and doing something," Gavalas said.

Impulsiveness, unsound judgment, egocentricity. Toddlers or teens?

Rachel Busman, a child and adolescent psychologist with the Child Mind Institute in New York, said the still-developing adolescent brain can exhibit those traits and more, only now teens with thoughts of invincibility can potentially do real harm to themselves and others.

For most people, the coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people

recover.

Some teens are skipping over the reality that they're potential carriers.

"They're very much primed toward reward and primed toward immediate gratification," Busman said.

What's a parent to do? Especially those of highly mobile older teens used to far greater freedoms than virus restrictions allow, including college kids whose schools have gone to remote learning or remain on spring break.

"If you start the conversation with, 'You can't do that,' you're probably going to be met with, 'Oh yes I can, I'm an adult' kind of thing," Busman said. "The first step is validate. Let your teen know you get it, even if you don't fully understand."

In Europe and elsewhere, authorities have stepped in.

Belgian media reported roughly 300 people attended a rave in the Luxembourg Province town of Tenneville last Saturday. Police and federal agents swooped in and broke it up.

In France, teens who defy a lockdown on nonessential trips out could cost their parents fines of \$40 to \$150. All residents must fill out a form documenting why they've left their homes during the 15-day period. Hanging out with friends is not considered a valid reason.

Just as spring weather arrived in Germany, with schools, clubs and concert halls closed, "corona" parties have surfaced despite restrictions. In addition, police dispersed young people from several parks across Berlin on Tuesday, according to local media. "It is not reasonable to in-



Cece Guida, 19, top, of New York City, pushes on Sam Reddick, 20, of Evansville, Ind., as spring break revelers look on during a game of chicken fight on the beach, Tuesday, March 17, 2020, in Pompano Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

vite a big party at home or other celebrations with many people," said Lars Schaade, the deputy head of Germany's public health agency.

Groups of teens have been congregating in cafes elsewhere in Europe.

Asked about the problem of roving young people, U.S. President Donald Trump joined the chorus Wednesday of those noting "they're feeling invincible," and sternly urged them to "heed the advice" to take care.

His coronavirus coordinator, Deborah Birx, warned

of "concerning reports" out of France and Italy that young people have become seriously ill from COVID-19.

Some parents are doing what they can.

In Williston, Vermont, Ann Schmidt said her 17-year-old son isn't one to sit around the house. He's a soccer player and skier, but his soccer center has shut down along with the slopes.

"He's been tooling around in his car, visiting friends. It's very hard," she said. "Taking away his physical activity is having a dramatic impact.

I'm trying to be as empathetic as possible while keeping him safe."

Schmidt sent him to a store with a credit card to buy an Xbox so at least he can play FIFA online.

In Manhattan, mom Alina Adams is holding her own with her three, ages 13, 16 and a 20-year-old home since his college closed.

"I'm being completely hands off because I know that the minute I suggest they do anything, they'll be instantly against it," she said. "My 13-year-old daughter has been making plenty of TikToks." □



'Accept it': 3 states lock down 70 million against the virus

Associated Press

Illinois and New York state joined California on Friday in ordering all residents to stay in their homes unless they have vital reasons to go out, restricting the movement of more than 70 million Americans in the most sweeping measures undertaken yet in the U.S. to contain the coronavirus. The states' governors acted in a bid to fend off the kind of onslaught that has caused the health system in southern Europe to buckle. The lockdowns encompass the three biggest cities in America — New York, Los Angeles and Chicago — as well as No. 8 San Diego and No. 14 San Francisco.

"No, this is not life as usual," New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said as the death toll in the U.S. topped 200, with at least 35 in his state. "Accept it and realize it and deal with it."

Cuomo said that starting Sunday, all workers in non-essential businesses must stay home as much as possible, and gatherings of any size will be banned in the state of over 19 million people. California likewise all but confined its 40 million residents on Friday, and Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced a similar order set to take effect on Saturday for the state's 12.6 million people. The governor of Connecticut, New York's neighboring state, said he also was poised to issue a comparable directive.

Exceptions were made for essential jobs and errands, such as buying groceries and medicine, as well as for exercise.

The lockdowns sent another shudder through the markets, where many fear a recession is a near certainty. Stocks tumbled on Wall Street, closing out their worst week since the 2008 financial crisis. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell more than 900 points, ending the week with a 17% loss.

The increasingly drastic measures in the U.S. came as gasping patients filled the wards of hospitals in Spain and Italy, and the global death toll surpassed



Two pairs of hikers maintain distance as they mingle at Vista View Point in Griffith Park, Friday, March 20, 2020, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

11,000, with the virus gaining footholds in new corners of the world. Over a quarter-million people worldwide have been infected, according to a count kept by Johns Hopkins University, though close to 90,000 of them have recovered.

Italy, the hardest-hit country in Europe, reported 627 new deaths, its biggest day-to-day rise since the outbreak began, and said new cases also shot up. Italy now has seen over 4,000 deaths — more even than China — and 47,000 infections. The soaring numbers came despite a nationwide lockdown.

The World Health Organization highlighted the epidemic's dramatic speed, noting it took more than three months to reach the first 100,000 confirmed cases but only 12 days to reach the next 100,000. Among those infected was a member of Vice President Mike Pence's staff. The White House said that staffer did not appear to have "close contact" with either Pence or Trump.

Across the U.S., where the number of infected topped 17,000, governors and public health officials watched the crisis in Europe with mounting alarm and warned of critical shortages of ventilators, masks and other gear at home.

In New York City, health offi-

cialists told medical providers to stop testing patients for the virus, except for people sick enough to require hospitalization, saying testing is exhausting supplies of protective equipment.

As promised earlier in the week, President Donald Trump officially invoked emergency wartime authority to try to speed production of such equipment. Countries frantically prepared for a deluge of patients in the coming weeks. In Britain, the government asked 65,000 retired nurses and doctors to return to work. A convention center and hotels in Madrid were being turned into field hospitals for nearly 10,000 patients. France's military worked to build a makeshift medical center in the hard-hit town of Mulhouse. The U.S. readied military hospitals for civilian use.

Trump also announced the closing of the Mexican border to most travel but not trade. That brings it in line with the restrictions on the Canadian border earlier this week. The federal government also moved the income tax filing deadline from April 15 to July 15.

"We're about to enter into a new way of living here in Los Angeles," Mayor Eric Garcetti said as California went into lockdown. "What we do and how we do it and if we get this right will

determine how long this crisis lasts."

The streets of America's cities were quieter than normal, even in many communities not under lockdown. In New York, Edjo Wheeler said he knew two people very sick with flu-like symptoms, which can indicate the coronavirus.

"That makes me walk around with my hands in my pocket to make sure I'm not touching things," said Wheeler, 49, who runs a nonprofit art center. He added: "If everyone doesn't cooperate, it's not going to be effective."

At the Paramount Drive-in near Los Angeles, Forrest and Erin McBride figured a drive-in movie was one of the few ways they could responsibly celebrate their anniversary.

"We were like, what can we do? Everything's closed," Forrest said before a showing of "Onward." "We were like, 'Well, a drive-in theater is kind of like a self-quarantined movie date.'"

The virus has struck at the very identities of many countries: closing down cafes, restaurants and boulevard life in France, ending la dolce vita in Italy, shutting down England's pubs and the ceremonial changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, damaging sales of tulips from Holland and shuttering the

Statue of Liberty in the U.S. Governments are trying to balance locking down residents with the need to keep food, medicine and other essentials flowing.

In Britain, the category of vital workers includes doctors, nurses and paramedics — and also vicars, truckers, garbage collectors and journalists. In New York, people venturing outside will have to stay at least 6 feet apart. And while they will be free to get some exercise to keep their sanity, there will be no "playing basketball with five other people," Cuomo said.

"These provisions will be enforced," the governor said. "These are not helpful hints." In Bergamo, the epicenter of the Italian outbreak, cemeteries were overwhelmed. Patients at the city's main hospital lined up in a narrow ward, struggling for breath as doctors and nurses moved swiftly from one beeping machine to the next.

"When the virus arrived here, there was no containment, and it spread through the valleys very quickly. ... Some said it was the normal flu. We doctors knew it was not," said Dr. Luca Lorini, head of intensive care at the hospital, where nearly 500 beds were dedicated to people suffering severe symptoms. Eighty patients were in intensive care.

While the illness is mild in most people, the elderly are particularly susceptible to serious symptoms. Italy has the world's second-oldest population, and the vast majority of its dead — 87% — were over 70.

Still, even younger people are at risk.

"You're not invincible," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned them. He noted that many countries are reporting that people under 50 make up a "significant proportion" of patients needing to be hospitalized.

Some of the only good news came from Wuhan, the Chinese city where the outbreak began and where hospitals were struggling just weeks ago. □



Silvia Shadden, 68, in blue, pulls a cart as she leaves a U.S. customs checkpoint in El Paso, Texas after a she went to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico for a doctor's appointment on Friday, March 20, 2020.

Associated Press

Virus prompts US and Mexico to restrict border travel

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mexico and the U.S. announced Friday that they would prohibit all "non-essential" travel across their shared border as part of efforts to control the spread of the coronavirus.

Both countries and Canada also agreed to immediately turn back anyone trying to cross their borders illegally, with U.S. officials saying that the unchecked entry of people from around the world poses a potential health risk because of the rapidly spreading virus.

"The actions we are taking together with our North American partners will save countless lives," President Donald Trump said in announcing the measures.

Trump administration officials and Mexican Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard outlined restrictions similar to those put in place earlier this week along the U.S. and Canadian border. The ban would apply to people who cross for tourism or recreation and other activities deemed "non-essential."

"Everyone else is not expected to have any difficulties," Ebrard told reporters in Mexico City. "We're not talking about closing it." The ban, which takes effect at 11:59 p.m. Friday, does not include commercial traffic and remains in place as long as needed, officials said.

By excluding commercial traffic from the ban, the

two governments substantially softened the economic effects. Also, fewer Americans are heading south because of a state-wide stay-at-home order in California and a State Department warning advising Americans not to travel abroad.

Still, the restrictions are a major development along the world's most heavily crossed border. Mexican shoppers are the lifeblood of smaller U.S. border towns, and it is common for people in both countries to cross frequently to visit family and friends.

As news of the ban spread, people like 68-year-old El Paso resident Silvia Shadden rushed to cross even if her reason could meet the definition of essential. Walking with a crutch, she returned from getting a weekly vitamin injection from a doctor in Mexico's Ciudad Juarez that costs a fraction of what it does in the U.S.

"I went to Juarez to see the doctor and get my injection," Shadden, who suffers from a vitamin deficiency that causes muscle atrophy, said as she returned from the U.S. border checkpoint.

In San Diego, an outlet mall catering to shoppers at the nation's busiest border crossing was closed and people made the last of what would be considered non-essential trips under the new rules. □



American and Canadian cruise ship passengers from the Costa Luminosa arrive at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, near Atlanta, Friday, March 20, 2020.

Associated Press

Stranded cruise ship passengers describe chaotic flight home

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON and JEFF MARTIN Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — On a chaotic flight home, some passengers who had been stranded for days aboard a cruise ship after being exposed to the coronavirus suffered breathing problems, many coughed and several fainted with no food or medical personnel provided, travelers said Friday.

"It was a suicide mission," said passenger Jenny Harrell, of Fredericksburg, Virginia. "It was a mass triage with absolutely no direction and the crew going, 'What should we do now?'" Decisions were left up to the passengers, said Harrell, who had some emergency medical training in the past and helped a physician who was also among the passengers.

The jet carrying 359 people, including hundreds of American and Canadian passengers from a Costa Cruises ship flying home from France, landed at Atlanta's international airport as emergency responders, and health and customs officials deployed to screen them for the coronavirus.

Three people on the flight tested positive for the coronavirus before landing but

had no symptoms, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. Thirteen others were sick but hadn't been tested, and one passenger was sent to a local hospital.

Harrell, 51, said she isolated two other passengers who were having breathing problems. One had a chronic lung disease and needed to be hooked to a ventilator, she said. Another passenger had an asthma attack and several others fainted, apparently from low blood sugar levels. Harrell said many travelers were coughing and she helped treat people who had a fever.

"There should have been medical personnel on that flight," Harrell said.

Costa Luminosa passengers also complained they were given no food other than orange juice and crackers in more than 24 hours — the time it took to disembark in Marseille, France, to fly to Atlanta, and be cleared by officials. At one point, Harrell said, the flight attendants handed her the cabin microphone.

"I basically took over the plane," she said. "I couldn't even make this up for a

movie."

In another instance, the co-pilot asked her and others whether they should land in Bermuda, instead of continuing all the way to Atlanta.

"We didn't have a choice. We had been turned away for the last eight days," Harrell said.

For many, the flight was a culmination of an already harrowing journey that began on March 5 in Fort Lauderdale. Some passengers said they wanted to cancel the trans-Atlantic cruise, but the company refused to give them a refund, assuring them it was safe to go three days before the U.S. State Department issued a warning for U.S. citizens not to travel on cruise ships.

On March 8, an Italian woman disembarked in Puerto Rico with breathing problems. She and her husband, who also got off the boat, were hospitalized and tested positive for the new coronavirus. Since the new cases came to light, the Costa Luminosa was denied entry to several countries.

The 1,400 passenger ship was finally allowed permission to dock in Marseille, France, under strict quarantine conditions. □

Health agencies: No evidence ibuprofen worsens coronavirus

LONDON (AP) — The World Health Organization and other leading agencies say there is no evidence to support the suggestion that ibuprofen might worsen the symptoms of COVID-19. WHO said earlier this week that it did a quick review and found no published research or data on the issue. It also checked with doctors treating coronavirus patients. The U.N. health agency said it was "not aware of reports of any negative effects of ibuprofen, beyond the usual known side effects." It added that it was not recommending against using ibuprofen for the treatment of fever in people with COVID-19. On Thursday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

also weighed in, stating that it was not aware of any evidence that taking a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug like ibuprofen could be harmful for people infected with the new coronavirus. Ibuprofen is sold under the brand names Advin, Motrin, Nurofen and others. The agencies were responding to a tweet last weekend from France's health minister, who said people who think they have COVID-19 should not take ibuprofen. Olivier Veran suggested those with a fever take paracetamol, also known as acetaminophen and sold under names such as Panadol, Calpol, and Tylenol. Veran said anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen



This Thursday, Nov. 2, 2017 photo shows tablets of ibuprofen in New York.

Associated Press

and cortisone could potentially worsen a coronavirus infection and that patients should consult their doctor if they were already taking the drug. The warning soon picked

up traction on social media but was quickly questioned by major health agencies and regulators. The potential link between non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen and

COVID-19 was raised in a letter published earlier this month in the journal *Lancet*, where doctors theorized that those drugs might make it easier for the coronavirus to infect cells. □

Continued from front

Some hospitals are down to just a day or two of personal protective equipment, she said. The AP found that in the past month, hand sanitizer and swab imports both dropped by 40%, N95 mask imports were down 55%, and surgical gowns, typically sourced from China, were at near normal levels because the sourcing was shifted to Honduras. Typically, medical supplies are delivered along both coasts. But almost all the supplies that did arrive in the past month came into Newark, New Jersey, across the country from the earliest and most severe coronavirus outbreaks. The AP identified the falling imports by looking at shipment data maintained by ImportGenius and Panjiva Inc., services that independently track global trade. In mid-February, the World Health Organization warned that global demand for safety gear for medical providers was 100 times higher than normal. Prices were 20 times higher, stockpiles were depleted and there was a four- to six-month backlog. Despite

this, federal contracting data shows there was no big effort at that point to submit orders. Trade policies haven't helped. Tariffs on medical supplies made them more expensive, and they were only lifted March 5, even though health care associations asked the administration last year to exempt items like masks, gloves and gowns. And now countries including South Korea, India and Taiwan are blocking exports of medical supplies to save them for their own citizens, leaving the U.S. with fewer options. "The lag time could be weeks. It could be upward of months," said Khatereh Calleja, CEO of the Healthcare Supply Chain Association. Doctors, nurses and first responders in the U.S. are resorting to spraying their masks with bleach at the end of each day and hanging them up at home to dry to use for another day, according to the American College of Emergency Physicians. "There is a little bit of anxiety, as you can imagine, going to work and not knowing if you will have



In this Tuesday, March 17, 2020, photo hand sanitizer and cleaner wipes sit in a cart as Des Moines Area Religious Council food pantry worker Patrick Minor passes out food at a senior center in Des Moines, Iowa.

Associated Press

enough personal protective equipment," said Dr. David Tan, president of the National Association of EMS Physicians. The decline in swabs included multiple varieties, not just ones needed to test for COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has for weeks warned state and local health departments about shortages of swabs, which are needed for the testing that is critical to containing the pandemic. Even over-the-counter medical shipments are decreasing. Ten shipping containers filled with medi-

cal thermometers arrived at U.S. ports a year ago this month. But in the last 30 days, there were just five. Hand sanitizer, also commonly sourced from China, has disappeared from U.S. stores, and it may stay scarce. Last year by this time, 223 shipments had arrived. This year, since January, just 157 shipments have come. The shortages affect patients because they can't get tested and their providers may be carrying the virus from one person to the next. But the far greater risk is to medical personnel: Already, there are reports of

dozens of doctors, nurses and medical staff who have contracted the virus. Nurses across the country report that they are not receiving the proper personal protective equipment and their hospitals don't have the isolation rooms they need to safely care for COVID-19 patients, according to National Nurses United, the largest union of registered nurses in the U.S. "It's not safe at all. Nobody is safe," said Consuelo Vargas, an emergency room nurse at Cook County Hospital in Chicago. On Friday morning, after a possible exposure at work, she went to a local hardware store and bought all the painter booties and jumpsuits they had to wear while caring for people. "It's so frustrating because we feel like health care workers are being asked for a lot — and that's fine, we can do our job. We're just asking for the equipment we need," she said. The shortage doesn't affect only health care. The humanitarian medical firm Direct Relief thought it was heading into 2020 well-stocked, with several million N95 masks. □

Moscow activists vow to fight on after clashes with police

MOSCOW (AP) — Activists in Moscow vowed Friday to persist with their campaign against plans to bulldoze a radioactive waste site, despite a police crackdown and mass detentions. The campaign started two months ago as a small grassroots effort, and made national headlines on Thursday night after riot police stormed the protesters' make-shift command post near the site and detained more than 60 people. On Friday, several dozen people gathered near the site once again. "We will continue to fight. Of course, we're not willing to give up," Larisa Bodrova, one of the activists, told The Associated Press before the

meeting. Awareness about environmental issues has been growing in Russia in recent years. In a poll released in December 2019 by the Levada independent pollster, 48% of Russians named environmental pollution as the number one threat of the 21st century, prioritizing it over terrorism. Environmental activism has been on the rise too. In 2018-2019, spontaneous environmental campaigns across the country — mostly against toxic landfills operating at capacity — accounted for the biggest non-political protests. Bodrova and dozens of other activists live in residential blocks in southeast Moscow, where city authori-



In this photo taken on Thursday, Feb. 27, 2020, Alexei Ozerov, physicist and activist fighting against turning a nuclear waste repository into a construction site of a highway, measures radiation levels at the place in southeastern Moscow, Russia.

Associated Press

ties plan to build a multi-lane motorway. Part of it is supposed to go through a plot of land where at

least 60,000 tons of nuclear waste are buried, according to Russia's public health watchdog Rospotrebnad-

zor. Digging into this contaminated land is dangerous as it would stir up a huge amount of radioactive dust, Alexei Ozerov, a physicist supporting the activists, told the AP. "People will be inhaling it, and (the dust) will spread quite far — 10-15 kilometers (around the site)," Ozerov said. Radiation levels on the surface of the soil in the area are already several times higher than normal, activists who regularly take measurements argue. Construction work was supposed to start in early January, but the activists blocked the entrance to the contaminated area, not letting workers and trucks in. □

Dutch court convicts tram shooter of deadly terror attack

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — A Dutch court convicted a radicalized Muslim man Friday of murder with a terrorist motive and sentenced him to life imprisonment for opening fire on a tram and killing four people last year. The defendant, 38-year-old Gokmen Tanis, was not in court to hear the verdict due to restrictions imposed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. "The suspect spread death and destruction in broad daylight in a tram in Utrecht," said presiding judge Ruud van Veldhuisen. Tanis stepped into the tram, then "pulled out a pistol with which he, while shouting the name of his god, Allah, shot at innocent passengers in cold blood. Not once, but many times in just over two minutes," the judge added. He said the terror attack sent shock waves through the central city of Utrecht and the rest of the Netherlands. Tanis did not answer questions during his trial and was repeatedly removed from court for insulting judges, his lawyer and families of victims.



In this Monday March 18, 2019, file image, the body of one of three victims is covered with a white sheet as it lies next to a tram after a shooting incident in Utrecht, Netherlands.

Associated Press

Tanis walked onto a tram in Utrecht on March 18, 2019 and used a pistol with a silencer attached to shoot passengers at close range. He then jumped out of the tram and shot a driver sitting behind the wheel of a car. Three people in the tram were killed and the man in the car died of his injuries more than a week later. The attack, which happened just days after the massacre at two mosques in the New Zealand city of Christchurch, sent the historic university city of Utrecht into lockdown as police hunted for the gunman. He

was detained hours after the shooting. Prosecutors said the silencer was adorned with texts referring to Islam that forensic tests later established were written by Tanis. He also left a note in a stolen getaway car that said in Dutch: "I'm doing this for my religion. You kill Muslims and you want to take our religion away from us, but you won't succeed. Allah is great." However, witness statements cited at trial described him as a part-time Muslim who veered between strictly observing the religion and drinking, gambling and taking drugs. □



A nun wearing a mask and gloves stands at the Istituto Figlie di San Camillo (Institute of Daughters of St. Camillo) in Grottaferata, near Rome, Friday, March 20, 2020.

Associated Press

Italy sees biggest day-to-day rise in coronavirus deaths

ROME (AP) — Italy has recorded its highest day-to-day rise in the number of deaths of people infected with the new coronavirus. Civil Protection Chief Angelo Borrelli said Friday the country recorded 627 more deaths in the 24 hours since Italy surpassed China on Thursday as the nation with the most COVID-19-related deaths. The total now stands at 4,032. Authorities said most of the people who died had existing health problems such as heart disease and dia-

betes before they were infected with the virus. Borrelli says Italy also saw a staggering increase of 5,986 cases from a day earlier, bringing the official total in Italy to 47,021. The soaring numbers come despite a national lockdown that drastically limits when residents are allowed to leave their homes. Police have issued citations to thousands of people for being out and about without valid reasons, such as going to work or shopping for food. □

China exonerates doctor reprimanded for warning of virus

BEIJING (AP) — China has exonerated a doctor who was officially reprimanded for warning about the coronavirus outbreak and later died of the disease, a startling admission of error by the ruling Communist Party that generally bodes no challenges to its authority.

The party's top disciplinary body said the police force in Wuhan had revoked its admonishment of Dr. Li Wenliang that had included a threat of arrest.

It also said a "solemn apology" had been issued to Li's family and that two police officers, identified only by their surnames, had been issued "disciplinary punishments" for the original handling of the matter.

In death, Li became the face of simmering anger at the ruling Communist Party's controls over information and complaints that officials lie about or hide disease outbreaks, industrial accidents, natural disasters and financial frauds, while punishing whistleblowers and independent



In this Feb. 7, 2020, file photo, people wearing masks attend a vigil for Chinese doctor Li Wenliang, who was reprimanded for warning about the outbreak of the new coronavirus, in Hong Kong. Associated Press

journalists.

After seeing thousands of new cases daily at the peak of the city's outbreak a month ago, Wuhan on Friday had its second consecutive day with no new confirmed or suspected cases.

The National Health Commission said all of the 39

new cases recorded Friday in China were brought from overseas, showing that rigid travel restrictions and social distancing requirements appear to have had their desired effect.

China has loosened some travel restrictions in Hubei, the province surrounding Wuhan, although its provin-

cial border remains closed and Wuhan itself remains under lockdown. Officials say they will only lift the quarantine after Wuhan goes 14 consecutive days with no new cases.

Police in December had reprimanded eight doctors including Li for warning friends on social media

about the emerging threat. China's supreme court later criticized the police, but the ruling party continued to tighten its grip on information about the outbreak.

The party has faced similar accusations of bungling or thuggish behavior following previous disasters. They include the 2003 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, a 2005 chemical spill that disrupted water supplies to millions of people in China's northeast, sales of tainted milk that sickened thousands of children and the failure of private finance companies after the global economic crisis.

In each case, officials were accused of trying to conceal or delay information people said they needed to protect themselves.

The party often responds by allowing the public to vent temporarily, then uses its control of media and the internet to stifle criticism. Critics who persist can be jailed on vague charges of spreading rumors or making trouble. □

Blast in southwest Pakistan coalmine kills 7, injures 3

QUETTA, Pakistan (AP) — Seven Pakistani miners were killed and three injured in a explosion Friday inside a coalmine in southwest Pakistan, a local mining official said.

Rescue workers pulled the injured from the mine and had recovered all the bodies, said Shafqat Mahmood, a mine inspector in Baluchistan province, where the accident took place.

He said investigators were still working to determine the cause of the blast near Degari, a town about 100 kilometers (60 miles) east of Quetta, Baluchistan's capital city. He provided no further details.

Safety standards are commonly ignored in the coal mining industry in Pakistan, leading to accidents and

explosions that have killed numerous mine workers in recent years. In July, rescue teams struggled to save 10 miners trapped in a coalmine in the Degari area after a methane gas explosion. Seven of the miners eventually died. The explosion occurred more than 4,000 feet (1,220 meters) below the surface. Miners often complain that owners fail to install safety equipment. Despite the danger and low wages, hundreds of miners work in Baluchistan, where unemployment is higher than other parts of the country. Separatists have for years waged a low-level insurgency in Baluchistan, complaining of discrimination and demanding a fairer share of the province's resources and wealth. □

At least 17 Afghan forces killed in insider attack

By TAMEEM AKHGAR
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — At least 17 police and army personnel were killed in an apparent insider attack at a joint military and police base early Friday, Afghanistan's Ministry of Defense said. The attack took place in southern Zabul province, a Taliban stronghold.

The Defense Ministry statement said the Taliban carried out the attack, but with the assistance of Afghan police and army personnel inside the base. It said 11 soldiers and six police were killed.

No one immediately took responsibility, but Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed said he would look into the allegation.

Provincial council member Assadullah Kakar had earlier given a higher toll of 25 killed, and said it was a Taliban attack with help from inside. It was not immediately possible to resolve the conflicting accounts.

The attack comes as the U.S. and NATO start a staged withdrawal of their troops, in keeping with a peace deal signed last

month between the United States and the Taliban.

The troop pullout is tied to promises by the Taliban to fight terrorism, including the Islamic State group's affiliate headquartered in eastern Afghanistan.

However, Washington has struggled to get Afghanistan's squabbling politicians to unite behind a single leader to start intra-Afghan negotiations, a critical next step in the U.S.-Taliban deal. Washington has also been critical of the violent attacks carried out by the Taliban targeting Afghan security forces, but not U.S. or NATO personnel.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's spokesman said Friday's "heinous" attack called into question the Taliban's commitment to the peace deal.

Ghani and his rival in last year's presidential polls had both declared themselves president in rival ceremonies earlier this month. Since then, Washington's peace envoy who brokered the U.S.-Taliban deal has been meeting the two leaders seeking a compromise. Until now the squabbling has only intensified. □

Zimbabwe has 1st COVID-19 case while Africa cancels flights

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Anxiety rose in Africa as two major airlines announced sweeping cancellations of international flights on Friday over the coronavirus, the continent's busiest airport blocked foreigners from disembarking and Zimbabwe announced its first case — in one of Africa's most visited tourist spots. The pandemic now threatens a national health system that has nearly collapsed amid an economic crisis.

South African Airways suspended all international flights until June. Ethiopian Airlines, Africa's largest carrier, cancelled flights to 30 countries. That airline, which operates a key continental hub, was under pressure from some in Africa's second most populous country to halt flights to high-risk countries.

In Zimbabwe the health minister, Obadiah Moyo, said the infected man lives in Victoria Falls, a popular tourist destination.

Moyo said the 38-year-old had travelled to Britain on March 7, returning home via neighboring South Africa on March 15. He put himself in self-quarantine upon arrival and later called his doctor after realizing "he was not feeling too well," the minister said. Zimbabwe days ago declared a national disaster. Public hospitals even before the pandemic lacked basic items such as gloves, and relatives of patients at times are expected to even provide buckets of water. Doctors at public hospitals recently went on strike for months, saying their pay of roughly \$100 a month was not enough to get by in a country with inflation at over 500%.

Meanwhile the elite routinely seek treatment abroad. Vice President Constantino Chiwenga this week flew to China for medical treatment unrelated to the coronavirus.

Zimbabwe's government has said it is "well prepared" to deal with COVID-19 cases.

Neighboring South Africa

said coronavirus cases jumped to 202, the most in the sub-Saharan region. Five of the new cases had attended a church gathering of more than 200 people in central Free State province. All had arrived from abroad. Authorities were rushing to find other attendees.

Johannesburg's O.R. Tambo International Airport said aircraft with foreigners "will be contained at an isolated bay with all officials ensuring the utmost care is taken," following up on travel restrictions an-



A boda-boda, or motorcycle taxi, driver wears a makeshift mask made from a local fabric known as Kitenge as he looks for customers in the Kibera neighbourhood of Nairobi, Kenya Friday, March 20, 2020.

Associated Press

nounced days ago when South Africa declared a national disaster. It was working with airlines to ensure foreigners' "return to the country of origin."

Foreigners across the continent of more than 1.3 billion people face the growing risk of being stranded as countries close borders.

The financially troubled South African Airways announced its immediate suspension of all international flights through May 31 as CEO Zuks Ramasia cited travel bans and plummeting demand. □

Guinea defies virus for vote that could keep leader in power

By BOUBACAR DIALLO

Associated Press

CONAKRY, Guinea (AP) — The West African nation of Guinea is defying the coronavirus pandemic to hold a controversial referendum on Sunday that could allow the president to stay longer in power.

Nearly 5 million voters are registered for the vote, which also will choose 14 National Assembly members. President Alpha Conde, whose second and currently final term ends in December, might win the chance to stand for two more seven-year terms.

Some civil society groups urge authorities to postpone the vote until the end of the pandemic. Guinea has two cases of the virus, according to the National Agency for Health Security. However, the ruling party has said the cases cannot prevent the rest of the country from voting. The election won't spread the virus, spokesman Amadou Damaro Camara said.

A coalition of opposition and civil society groups, the National Front for the Defense of the Constitution, which has been demonstrating against the referendum, has called for another demonstration on Saturday and Sunday against the election.

When asked if calling for mass gatherings was the right thing to do amid a

pandemic, the coalition's spokesman Sekou Koundouno said they had no other choice. They have said this year they will use all means necessary to prevent the vote on a referendum. More than 36 people have died in demonstrations against the referendum since October, along with at least one gendarme.

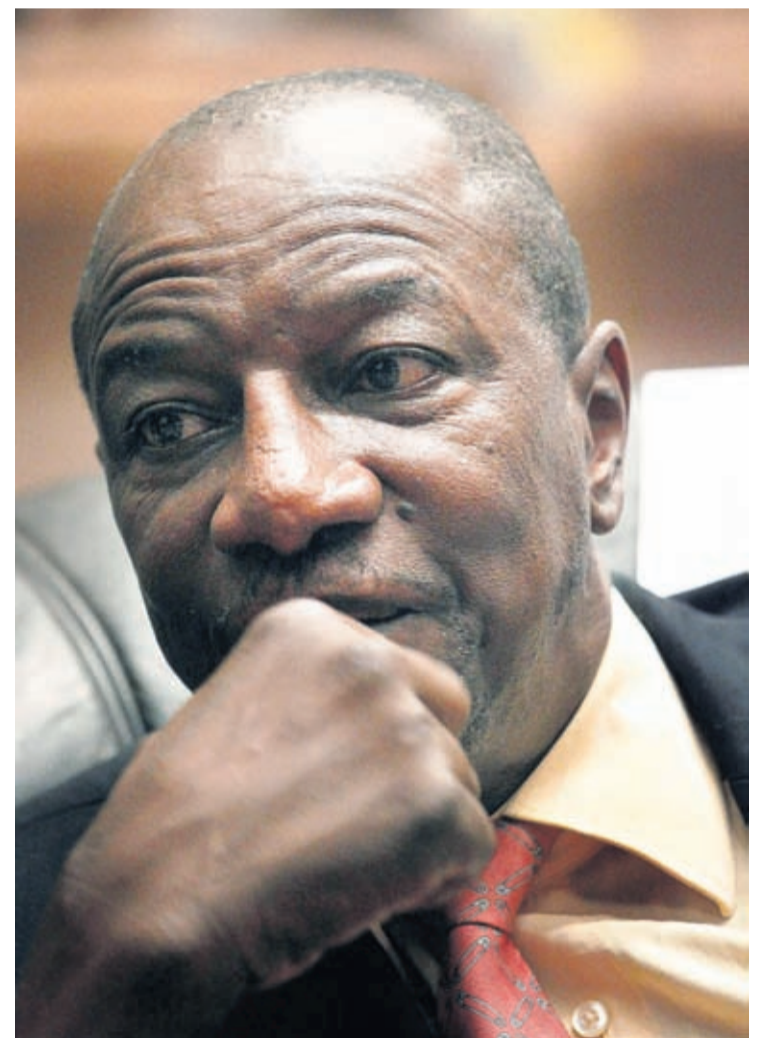
"It is up to the government to take all practical health measures against coronavirus. It is not up to a social entity like (us)," he said.

Conde, first elected in 2010, is barred from running for a third term under the constitution. While the amended constitution would keep a two-term limit and increase terms from five years to seven, Conde has implied that his previous terms served would not count.

Faced with the risk of the virus and potential violence, many residents have left the capital, Conakry.

"I'm going to Sierra Leone. My kids go to school, but I got them out," said Assiatou Bobo Sow, a clothes merchant surrounded by her children at the train station. "We leave Guinea despite ourselves. But we prefer this to avoid coronavirus or a stray bullet."

Dr. Sakoba Keita, coordinator of the National Agency for Health Security, asserted that the virus can be avoided during the elec-



This is a Sept. 21, 2010 file photo of Guinea president Alpha Conde at the People's Hall in Conakry, Guinea.

Associated Press

tion if voters keep a meter away from each other.

While many fled, others remained, saying they will vote. Some pointed to the country's resilience in the devastating Ebola outbreak in 2014-16 that killed well over 10,000 in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

"There has been Ebola in Guinea. There are mar-

kets, right? People went to school right? People went to mosques, right? To the church, right?" asked Mansa Fofana, a car salesman in Conakry.

"Let's stop telling us that coronavirus can prevent daylong elections. I ask the president to keep the election date and not postpone it." □

Mexico's president in no hurry to confront virus outbreak

By PETER ORSI

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Many countries in Latin America have taken aggressive measures to deal with the coronavirus such as closing their borders, dock and airports to foreigners, declaring states of emergencies and ordering business shut-downs.

Mexico, by contrast, has so far taken a "business as usual" attitude. People still crowd street markets picking through piles of fruit and vegetables. Cars and trucks continue to fill the streets and commuters throng subway trains, though the volume of traffic is noticeably lower.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and his government have said a shut-down of the country would disproportionately hurt poor people and also be a psychological weight on all Mexicans. They say there is no reason to impose major restrictions before health officials deem them necessary — a moment they are expecting in late March, based on the virus' pattern elsewhere and the Feb. 27 date of Mexico's first confirmed case.

The approach is worrying many experts.

But it is the president's personal attitude that has Mexicans puzzled. He continues to attend mass public rallies, shaking hands and kissing babies. Asked how he was protecting Mexico, López Obrador removed two religious amulets from his wallet and proudly showed them off.

"The protective shield is the 'Get thee behind me, Satan,'" López Obrador said, reading off the inscription on the amulet, "Stop, enemy, for the Heart of Jesus is with me."

López Obrador, often described as a leftist, is in fact a nationalist with deep religious feelings.

"I think President López Obrador is trying to project confidence and minimize the risk," said Jesus Silva-Herzog, a political commentator and professor at the Tecnológico de Monterrey University.

But, Silva-Herzog added,



Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador gives his daily news conference at the presidential palace in Mexico City, early Thursday, March 19, 2020.

Associated Press

"I think that what he has wound up doing is minimizing the risks associated with the emergency, and sending messages that contradict what is being said almost everywhere else."

Mexico reported its first death from the virus Wednesday — a 41-year-old man said to have been obese and suffering from diabetes. As of late Thursday, the country has 164 confirmed cases of coronavirus, up from just over 40 a week ago.

Still, Hugo López-Gatell, deputy secretary in the Health Ministry and the administration's public face of López Obrador's coronavirus response team, said the country remains in what it calls phase 1 of the epidemic, with all cases related to importation from other countries and no community transmission.

Federal officials have suspended classes for about a month beginning after Friday's school sessions and are encouraging things like social distancing, working from home and following hygienic measures recom-

mended by international and domestic health experts.

Some large events have been called off, yet others such as a multi-day music festival attended by tens of thousands in Mexico City were allowed to proceed. Federal officials recommend that "non-essential" gatherings should not be larger than 5,000 people, while local authorities in the capital have said events topping 1,000 people should be canceled.

Mexico has only 5,000 emergency beds, and about 1,500 intensive care or sealed rooms, for a population of over 125 million, but officials still exude a sense of calm at their daily briefings on the virus. And some observers say they are chilled by remarks like López Obrador's.

"I think this has shown a lack of respect by the president," said Carlos Padilla, a Mexico City business administrator. "I think he should be doing a better job of protecting the public, in every sense."

Once community transmis-

sion begins — and Mexican officials make no secret that they know it is coming, sooner rather than later — the country is likely to see more aggressive measures. "We are prepared. We have enough budget. All the resources we need," López Obrador said Thursday.

Some, however, are beginning to be nervous about the lack of response now, including among the president's political opposition. The conservative National Action Party sent a letter to the Pan American Health Organization on Thursday expressing its "deep concern about the government's actions in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Former diplomat Enrique Berruga Filloy said in a column for the newspaper El Universal on Thursday that Mexico's geographic advantages gave it more leeway to plan for the virus and take timely actions, but that the administration has squandered the chance.

"The tsunami is coming

and we, instead of seeking safety, are playing on the beach," Berruga Filloy wrote.

Like in other countries, Mexico's stock market has been hit hard by coronavirus concerns. The peso has slid precipitously, trading over 24 to the dollar at times this week for the first time in history.

Alfredo Coutiño of Moody's Analytics said Mexico's markets "are now realizing that the country is facing a higher risk of contamination by the coronavirus" with the Mexican economy already weak.

Despite assurances from officials, Mexico and its health system are showing "real vulnerability," Coutiño said.

He said investors particularly don't like the lack of government measures to protect the economy and the people. "Fiscal and monetary policies are running far behind the curve," he said.

National Action senators proposed a package of measures this week that would include measures such as lowering interest rates, stimulating home construction and infrastructure, reactivating private investment in the energy sector and transferring money to the Health Department. But López Obrador is known for a visceral dislike of spending and deficits.

López Obrador displayed the administration's attitude Thursday when he said everything is going according to plan.

"All of the scenarios that we foresaw for what was going to happen, are happening," he said. "This will allow us to keep to a well-planned, well-calculated technical plan of action."

López Obrador, who enjoys approval ratings that would be the envy of many a world leader, said Thursday that military medical workers and installations would be part of the pandemic response. But he ruled out any curfew or troop deployments, saying he wanted nothing to do with tough measures that could be seen as authoritarian. □

LOCAL



Curfew implemented

ORANJESTAD, Aruba –Starting Saturday, March 21st, the Government of Aruba will implement a curfew from 9pm to 6am.

During these hours, nobody is allowed on the streets.

Those who work essential night shifts and have to go to work or back home must have a document with them that proves this.

There is an exception for the pharmacy on duty, it can stay open.

Those who do not comply with the regulations of the curfew can get a

fine up to 10,000 Aruban florins and for violation of opening hours up to 1000 florins.

Starting Saturday, March 21, the Government of Aruba has decided that the Aruban borders will be closed for entry. Nobody can enter the country. This restriction counts for residents of Aruba as well.

Only empty flights can come in to pick up passengers leaving Aruba to take them to their destination. □

Decisions taken by the Government of Aruba

The Government of Aruba has taken the following measurements in order to mitigate the further spread of Corona Virus COVID-19:

- Starting Saturday, March 21, the Government of Aruba will implement a curfew from 9pm to 6am. During these hours, nobody is allowed on the streets. Those who work essential night shifts and have to go to work or back home must have a document with them that proves this. There is an exception for the pharmacy on duty, it can stay open. Those who do not comply with the regulations of the curfew can get a fine up to 10,000 Aruban florins and for violation of opening hrs up to 1000 florins.
- Starting Saturday, March 21, the Government of Aruba has decided that the Aruban borders will be closed for entry. Nobody can enter the country. This restriction counts for residents of Aruba as well. Only empty flights can come in to pick up passengers leaving Aruba to take them to their destination.
- Starting from March 15, 2020 until March 31, 2020, Passengers traveling from the Netherlands, Europe, The USA and other countries on the list of WHO, will be restricted to enter Aruba. With exception for residents.
- Residents who are abroad and are having difficulties to return to Aruba can contact 569 6897 for assistance.
- All locations of nocturnal activity are allowed to stay open until 10 pm at and have to close their doors at the aforementioned hour.
- A recommendation goes to all owners or organizers of social, religious, restaurant activities, where there is a mass gathering to keep it to a maximum of 50 persons.
- Starting from March 15, 2020 to March 31, 2020, all public activities (organized by the government) and private activities, from which a (polis) permit has been granted are canceled.
- International Airport Reina Beatrix has elevated its control of all flights coming from countries which are not on the restriction list. To be more precise European countries.
- All schools will be closed from March 16, 2020 to March 20, 2020, until further notice. These measurements include schools, Day Care Centers and all organizations in charge of education and care of our children.
- It is prohibited to visit retirement homes.
- Government departments are working with limited personal. Services to the public will be given on appointment basis only, if it is necessary all other services will be given via telephone or email.
- This measurement is to prevent overcrowding in Government Departments and public spaces.
- It is our priority to contain, mitigate and prevent that the virus will be further transmitted. Please be aware and pay attention to all advice and requirements given by the Government of Aruba.

All decisions taken by the Government of Aruba has been in full collaboration with experts of the Crisis Commission of the Government of Aruba. The elder community (people 60+ years) and people with chronic disease have the highest risk to get serious complications due to COVID-19.

Wash your hands as frequently possible for 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer containing at least 70% alcohol. Avoid being in physical contact with others, greet without handshaking, hugging or kissing.

If you are feeling sick, isolate yourself in your house and call 280-0101 for further information and instructions.

The fight against the transmission of the Corona Virus begins with YOU! □

Harbour House Aruba: “80 % sold already, we are doing great”



ORANJESTAD — Boosting a buyers confidence comes with a strong sales team, an established company name and experience. The Perret Group are the owners of among others Harbour House Aruba and they live up to the expectation. With 80 % of the condominiums sold in their residence they can do nothing more but be content. Take a look at this cool site reflecting best of two worlds: beach and city.

The residence consists of 111 units in the former 7-level Marazul building at the historical location of Paardenbaai. Harbour House Aruba is the ultimate smart investment or personal living space. Marinelda Cartaya, Sales Manager, explains why. “A state-of-the-art lobby, an ocean-view gym, bar service, rooftop with 360 degrees view of Oranjestad, on-site parking, 24-hours security and a top floor lounge area with Jacuzzi’s. Cherry on the cake: an infinity pool.”

Harbour House Aruba offers cosmopolitan living in a beach-chic environment. The residence is fast-selling their studios, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units for many reasons but in a nutshell we can name: great location, great value for your money and great quality. To see exactly what still is available you may check the website which shows you a map with sold and open units. Updates on construction are also on forehand. When you live abroad stopping by to check upon your purchase is not that simple, yet with the monthly updates on their website, it is a lot easier.



“There are only a few units left, now we are working on the amenities like the pool that is almost finished. We are installing the Jacuzzi area on top and we have all the exterior windows in so we are right on schedule, expecting to deliver in September,” Marinelda explains.

The process of purchase is easy, whether you are abroad or on the island. Make an appointment through the website to visit the sales office when you are here. In that way you can actually see the unit, materials and amenities. If you are not on the island the website can help you out and the sales office is happy to send you all needed documentation for you to orientate. “When agreed upon the unit you sign an agreement and move forward with the down payment.

At receipt of that amount the sales is closed and the price will not change. You know what you get and will not be surprised by price changes. The payment agreements after the deposit will be discussed and are flexible. We assist also in financing by banks,” says Marinelda.

The ground level of the building will provide a gallery of restaurants, art gallery, stores, and supermarket. “We get in more requests for renting and so far we have restaurant, salon, mini market, art gallery a craft beer factory which makes up for a great variation. A parking lot will be assigned to the owners and visitors.”

City elegance combined with tropical tranquility is what you get here. The panoramas are breathtaking. Can you imagine yourself with your favorite cup of joe, gazing out over the ocean while the city of Oranjestad is awakening? The new trend is to live tiner but comfy and Harbour House meets this market demand with the perfect product.

Everything is close, you are centrally located, just a step away from the beach though right in the main area in Oranjestad. You have history to tell and you are within walking distance to all Oranjestad has to offer. What else do you need?

For more information: <https://harbourhousearuba.com> □



Send us your positive message from home

ORANJESTAD — In these difficult times we would like to reach out to our friends abroad who were supposed to spend their tropical vacation on Aruba or who had to break up their vacation due to the COVID-19 situation. Aruba Today invites you to send us your picture and words expressing your memory of our island or your dream vacation for the future. You may also just say hello and show us how you feel because we are all in the same boat right now.

Send us your picture(s) together with completing the sentence: Aruba to me is (Email: news@arubatoday.com). Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to

The Aruba Today newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website and Facebook page!

Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again and look forward to have you here with us soon again! Stay healthy and keep safe!

Take a look at the pictures we received from our readers in which they express their memory of their home away from home. ☐



Bob Marino Late Feb., Eagle Beach...



Christine Muis



Julie Wray Back in Dec. Was supposed to return next Fri, but had to be cancelled. Hopefully will return soon



Stacy Dungan The same Gucci store downtown. Dec 1989-Feb 2020.



Jodi Sousie Meegan Our first stay in Nov 2019 to your beautiful Island



George Ramirez



Trish Riffe Hoping to be back in June.. missing our 2nd home and all of our friends and family



Katharine Kenny With our favorite bartender Billy at the Riu Palace Thursday 3/19/2020

Send us your positive message from home



Enjoying sister time in paradise.
Greer S., Shelah M., & Katrina W. from Marlton, New Jersey



Manon Viervoetertje Naomi MensHond



Phyllis Rubin We're still trying to have fun.



Richard Purdy Feb 5th Renaissance



Siu Siu Praying my May trip won't be canceled...



Kitty Haugh April 2019! Hope to get thru this virus in Penna. and return next year!

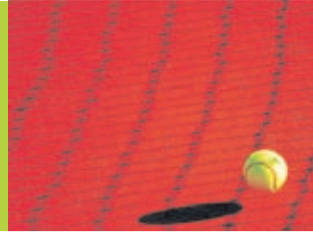


Michelle Ann



Patty Suprenant Just a few weeks ago

SPORTS



In this Jan. 10, 2015, file photo, New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady holds up the game ball after an NFL divisional playoff football game against the Baltimore Ravens in Foxborough, Mass.

Associated Press

Optics of big NFL contracts just aren't right

By TIM DAHLBERG
AP Sports Columnist

The NFL is now allowing teams to announce free agent signings, after a few days of keeping things unofficial because players can't travel for physicals.

That's good for players and it's good for the league. Fans have something to talk about, and players have some certainty about where they might be playing and how much they'll be making when and if the 2020 season begins.

The optics, though, are a bit disconcerting.

Go ahead and make the deals, sure. Just don't make too big of a deal about them.

It's not a time to celebrate the \$118 million Tennessee gave Ryan Tannehill, or the \$61 million Kirk Cousins will be guaranteed to play under center for the Minnesota Vikings. Not a time to debate whether tackle Jack Conklin should get more than \$30 million guaranteed from the Cleveland Browns.

Continued on page 22



A plane carrying the Olympic flame arrives before Olympic Flame Arrival Ceremony at Japan Air Self-Defense Force Matsushima Base in Higashimatsushima in Miyagi Prefecture, north of Tokyo, Friday, March 20, 2020.

Associated Press

Olympic flame lands in Japan as doubts grow over Tokyo Games

Associated Press
MATSUSHIMA AIR BASE, Japan (AP) — The Olympic flame on Friday completed its difficult journey from Greece to Japan.

That signified a small, symbolic victory for the IOC and local organizers, who maintain the Tokyo Olympics will open on July 24 amid a chorus of doubters who believe they should be postponed or canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"For the first time in 56 years, the Olympic torch is heading to Tokyo and I hope that the Olympic torch will illuminate the path of hope for many people," organizing committee President Yoshiro Mori said at a scaled-down arrival ceremony at an air base in northern Japan.

Mori of course was refer-

ring to Tokyo's famous 1964 Olympics. Tokyo was also to have been the venue for the 1940 Olympics, which were cancelled by World War II.

"We will work closely with the International Olympic Committee, the Japanese government, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government," he said, and based on the World Health Organization's advice, "we will ensure a safe and secure games."

The flame, carried in a tiny canister from Greece, reached Japan aboard a white aircraft painted with the inscription "Tokyo 2020 Olympic Torch Relay" along its side. The tail section was adorned with the refrain "Hope Lights our Way."

The aircraft was welcomed on the tarmac by a small contingent of organizing

committee officials. Two of Japan's most famous Olympians — three-time wrestling gold medalist Saori Yoshida and three-time judo gold medalist Tadahiro Nomura — received the flame for the lighting ceremony.

The two climbed portable stairs and entered the aircraft before emerging holding the cradle-like canister with a flame burning inside. They handed it over at the base of the stairs to Mori, who delivered a brief acceptance speech in a gusting wind.

Yoshida and Nomura then took the torch and ignited a large cauldron on the tarmac of the air base.

Mori referred to the "difficult situation" with the virus, and then thanked the IOC and Greek officials that the "hand-over ceremony was able to be held" with the

Olympics set to open in just over four months.

The flame arrived in the northeastern part of Japan, roughly 250 kilometers (150 miles) from Tokyo, that was devastated by the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and meltdown of three nuclear reactors that has left many still living in temporary quarters.

The flame will stay in northern Japan for almost a week until the torch relay begins officially on March 26 from Fukushima prefecture. It will be put on public display in the three prefectures most affected by the disaster — Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima,

Even if the Olympics and Paralympics don't start as scheduled, the burning flame could be used as a symbol and a rallying point for the Japanese public. □



In this March 8, 2020, file photo, South Carolina head coach Dawn Staley reacts during a championship match against Mississippi State at the Southeastern Conference women's NCAA college basketball tournament in Greenville, S.C.

Associated Press

Women's basketball coaches deal with reality of no NCAAs

NEW YORK (AP) — South Carolina coach Dawn Staley knows that Monday was supposed to be the night that women's basketball got put in the national spotlight with the NCAA Tournament bracket reveal.

She was set to watch the selection show with her team and thousands of Gamecocks fans at Colonial Life Arena. But with the NCAA Tournament canceled because of the new coronavirus, she said she'd most likely be sitting at home with her dog, Champ. She also spent some time on Instagram Live with the team's fans.

"We had a FAMdemonium planned, watch it on the Jumbotron," she said in a phone interview Monday. "We've done it the past couple of years. Our freshmen and transfer won't get a chance to experience that. To see your name pop on the screen whether you're the No. 1 overall seed or just getting in. We've had the experience of the latter — not being a No. 1 overall seed. Any time your name is planted on screen you really feel good about it."

Staley's team was expected to be the No. 1 overall selection in the bracket.

Teams and coaches across the country, instead of celebrating a spot in the NCAAs or commiserating about not making it, were left to think about what might have been.

IUPUI coach Austin Parkinson planned to celebrate the school's first selection for the women's NCAA Tournament. His team won the Horizon League last week to earn an automatic berth and he was all set to have his players over to his house to see where they would be placed in the bracket.

"While we didn't get a chance to do it, we were fortunate enough to have a final meeting on Friday," Parkinson said. "We brought food in and everyone shared what they were thinking when the final buzzer went off after we won the tournament. Who they heard from after the game. How they celebrated that night. It was a nice little celebration, a little closure for this group. It was a really big deal and neat to share those stories before everyone took off."

Michigan coach Kim Barnes Arico always used to fret on Selection Monday about whether her team would make the tour-

namment and where it landed if it did. She had a good feeling that the Wolverines would have had a decent seeding this year.

She spent Sunday night with her family making cookies and watching "Frozen 2." She figured Monday night would be more of the same.

"My kids have provided a distraction," she said. "You try to keep busy because if you don't, you just think about what could have been. You have to give yourself the proper time to adjust to it."

Both Parkinson and Barnes Arico felt lucky that they were able to have closure with their teams. At Michigan's final practice on Thursday, Barnes Arico had each member of the team including practice players, managers and staff say what they were thankful for.

Many teams, like South Carolina, didn't get that chance. Staley told her team via text message that the NCAA Tournament had been canceled and with her players spread throughout the country, they commiserated via text.

The Oregon Ducks were on break when the news came down. □



Adam Scott leaves in a vehicle after the PGA tour canceled the rest of The Players Championship golf tournament as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, Friday, March 13, 2020, in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

LPGA reschedules major in California desert to September

By **DOUG FERGUSON**
AP Golf Writer

Amid a slew of postponements and cancellations in golf, the LPGA Tour announced a September date for what traditionally is its first major championship of the year.

The ANA Inspiration, previously scheduled for April 2-5 in Rancho Mirage, California, now will be played Sept. 10-13. That date previously was for the Cambia Portland Classic, which will move back by one week.

It's the first postponed golf tournament to announce a new date.

The schedule change was announced Friday along with the postponement of three more LPGA Tour events because of the new coronavirus. They were to be played the final three weeks of April — in Hawaii, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Meanwhile, the Official World Golf Ranking and the Rolex Women's World Golf Ranking are freezing the rankings since golf is shut down from the coronavirus, with no tournaments on main tours until May at the earliest. That's particularly significant for the Olympics because qualifying for the 60-player fields is determined by world ranking. Countries are allowed two players, with a maximum of four if they are among the top 15.

The main men's tours —

PGA Tour, European Tour and PGA Tour Champions — have no tournaments on the schedule through May 17. That includes two majors for the men — the Masters and the PGA Championship — and one major for the 50-and-older PGA Tour Champions.

The next scheduled LPGA Tour event is May 14-17 at the new Pelican Women's Championship in Belleair, Florida. For the PGA Tour, it would be the Charles Schwab Challenge at Colonial on May 21-24.

In a letter to his players, LPGA Tour Commissioner Mike Whan said he held out as long as he could on the latest three postponements and is trying to figure out how to repackage the season when it's safe to play again.

"Assuming we get some relief from the COVID-19 issues soon, it's pretty clear that the rest of the 2020 season will be quite busy and crowded," Whan said. "We are focused on giving you as many playing opportunities as we can."

The world ranking is a two-year formula in which points depreciate over time. Without any golf being played, movement in the ranking is possible depending on how often a player competes. A minimum of 40 events and a maximum of 52 events over the two years are applied in the formula. □

Horse racing grapples with risks of running during pandemic

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Sports Writer

Horse racing is quickly learning it is not totally immune to the effects the coronavirus pandemic has had on other sports, and now it's grappling with the risks of continuing operations.

The Louisiana Derby for now is still set for Saturday, the world's richest day of races is scheduled to go on in late March in Dubai and several tracks across the U.S. and worldwide remain open. But a worker in New York testing positive for the new coronavirus and shuttering another racetrack and jockeys growing reluctant to ride has put racing on edge.

"I think we're living on borrowed time," said trainer Tom Amoss, who put himself into self-quarantine after interacting with coronavirus positive New Orleans Saints coach Sean Payton at a track last weekend. "We're one jockey away from getting a positive test or getting sick to close our track down."

Following the lead of tracks in Japan and Hong Kong, many in the U.S. decided to close to the general public but keep running with only essential personnel. The Kentucky Derby was postponed until the fall with the other Triple Crown races expected to follow, but with no NCAA Tournament and few, if any, other events going on, horse racing for at least a little while has been the only live sport to watch and gamble on.

"If we can operate it and do it at a safe manner, it's great, and it gives people

something to do," Preakness and Belmont-winning trainer Mark Casse said before the latest developments.

How safe remains a question. Prominent U.S.-based jockeys Irad Ortiz Jr., Luis Saez and Tyler Gaffalione each said they wouldn't travel to Dubai because of coronavirus or quarantine fears, and Ortiz took it a step further by announcing he wouldn't take any mounts right now.

"After a lot of consideration, I have decided to stop riding," Ortiz tweeted. "This is the safest decision for my family and myself. Hopefully we can all make it safely out of this quarantine sooner than later and get back to what we all love."

A backstretch worker at Belmont Park on Long Island tested positive Thursday for COVID-19, and Aqueduct Racetrack suspended live racing indefinitely. Maryland's Laurel Park announced it was "pausing" live racing, while Florida's Gulfstream Park closed Friday with plans to reopen Saturday.

Tracks are taking precautions such as temperature checks and limits on the number of people allowed in certain areas at a time. National Thoroughbred Racing Association president and CEO Alex Waldrop said there's a focus on protecting and caring for backstretch and stable workers who look after the horses, with dorm rooms available for isolation and ongoing communication with health officials.

"We have to be very careful that even in this circum-



Horses run in the fourth race at Santa Anita Park in front of empty stands, Saturday, March 14, 2020, in Arcadia, Calif.

Associated Press

stance we're not subjecting people to any undue risks," Waldrop said. "If there is an outbreak of any sort, we'll be on the lookout for that. That may change the situation. It's a day-to-day situation. We're doing our best to keep everyone safe."

In recent days, with long-established online betting platforms, less reliance on fans at the track, plenty of television coverage and limited contact among people it seemed possible for the sport to continue operating.

"We obviously don't have as much to lose because we've done such a poor job of developing new fans, which would be the people that would come to the track," Thoroughbred Idea Foundation founder Craig Bernick said. "So, frankly, if they're not allowing fans

on the racetrack, all of that (money wagered) should be protected because they weren't coming anyway."

The money had still been coming in. Over \$17.5 million was bet on three days of racing at Aqueduct Park last weekend, up from the same weekend two years ago. Oaklawn Park in Arkansas reported \$10.1 million wagered last Saturday on 11 races, and figures across the country were similarly strong even with tracks closed to the general public.

"Racing goes pretty much from noon until 9 or 10 at night, so not quite around the clock, but we've actually noticed a bigger uptick in business for the nighttime" races, said Ed DeRosa, marketing director for Bloodstock Research

Information Services. "It's pretty clear, to no surprise of anyone, that business is up, especially online because of racing being the only game in town."

It's also the only game on TV. On a weekend usually reserved for the NCAA Tournament, NBC Sports and Fox Sports are increasing coverage this weekend of major races going on from coast to coast, including the \$1 million Louisiana Derby.

But things have changed and horse racing is facing mounting obstacles that could halt everything in its tracks.

"I'm fully aware there's a bigger issue here than whether we race horses in the immediate future or not," Amoss said. "Our country's health is first and foremost." □

Judge recommends dismissing suit against former MSU coach

By **NOAH TRISTER**

DETROIT (AP) — A federal judge has recommended that a former Michigan State football staff member's claims against former Spartans football coach Mark Dantonio, former athletic director Mark Hollis and former school President Lou Anna Simon should be dismissed.

Curtis Blackwell filed a

lawsuit in November 2018 claiming his employment agreement was violated when he was disciplined while the school addressed sexual assault allegations against three players in 2017. Dantonio, Hollis and Simon were named as defendants in the suit. Two MSU police detectives were also named as defendants.

In a filing Friday, Magistrate Judge Sally J. Berens said the case against Dantonio, Hollis and Simon "appears to have been prosecuted for an improper purpose and should be dismissed." Berens did not recommend dismissing the claims against the detectives. The recommendation goes to Janet T. Neff, the federal judge overseeing the case.

"Plaintiff Blackwell's attorneys have repeatedly misused court process to elicit information unrelated to his case and then have publicly filed that information, at least once in violation of a court order," Berens said in her recommendation.

She added that it appears Blackwell's lawyers "have used discovery, not to adduce support for the

narrow claim Plaintiff alleges against the MSU Defendants in this case, but to harass the defendants and to build a case they have now filed in state court." Blackwell recently filed a lawsuit in Wayne County Circuit Court, naming Dantonio, Hollis, Simon and current Michigan State athletic director Bill Beekman as defendants. □

Without games, NBA players using their platforms in new way

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

Cleveland's Kevin Love did his best to reassure a skittish and scared public. Denver's Jamal Murray sat at his piano and played theme songs. Atlanta's Trae Young shot balled-up socks into a trash can. Miami's Goran Dragic, in his native Slovenian, told people to stay inside.

This is the new NBA normal in a coronavirus-dominated world.

Even without games, the league is trying to engage and even encourage fans in these tough times.

So far, almost 20 current and former players have partnered with the NBA and WNBA for a new sort of public-service announcement as the world continues dealing with the coronavirus pandemic that is known to have struck about a quarter-million people worldwide, killed nearly 10,000 and has essentially shut down sports around the globe.

"We're able to reach a number probably in the hundreds of millions, but as far as kids go, tens of millions of kids just by pressing send on an NBA PSA," Love said. "So for me, it was considering that community aspect as well as, you know, thinking of young kids now being at home being homeschooled, at-risk youth be-



Cleveland Cavaliers' Kevin Love, right, and Matthew Dellavedova celebrate after Love made a three-point shot in overtime in an NBA basketball game against the San Antonio Spurs, Sunday, March 8, 2020, in Cleveland. The Cavaliers won 132-129 in overtime.

Associated Press

ing homeschooled ... we have to reach them."

Love's PSA, released earlier this week, went for nearly three minutes and was a continuation of sorts of the conversation he's been having publicly for some time about mental health. "Now more than ever, we have to practice compassion. ... We need more of that," Love said in his video. Love went public two years ago about his struggles with depression and was one of the first NBA players

to announce a donation to help arena employees who aren't at work right now because of the shutdown. He gave \$100,000 and has been raising money through his Kevin Love Fund to directly donate to mental health organizations working with high-risk children and teens who need help with their mental well-being. Love didn't hesitate before deciding whether to talk directly to fans.

"This is just incredibly anxiety-ridden, stressful, and I

think the unknown is what really scares us," Love said. "So, it's completely normal to feel this way and what people are feeling is normal. And I think that just being isolated at your home, it's tough to stay away from this 24-hour news cycle where all people are getting are things that will send them down a slippery slope and in a spiral because it just seems to be so negative."

The league started these PSAs on March 13, two days

after the NBA's shutdown because of the virus went into effect. In less than a week across all platforms — NBA.com, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Tik Tok — the videos collected more than 36 million views, or reaching, on average, 70 people every second.

"Just a reminder to make sure you guys wash your hands, avoid large crowds and if you might be sick, quarantine yourself," Portland guard Damian Lillard said in his PSA. "This is only a virus that we can beat together." Toronto coach Nick Nurse was one of many who spoke about the need to listen to medical professionals and wash hands frequently; the official guideline is 20 seconds, Nurse suggested raising the bar to 24 seconds in a nod to the NBA shot clock.

"This is one time we don't mind a shot clock violation," Nurse said.

Other NBA players are making sure to keep their social-media contact with fans up in different ways. Phoenix's Frank Kaminsky and New Orleans' JJ Redick are among the players who have dropped podcasts this week, and the Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James took his enormous following inside his home for a 45-minute live video Thursday night while he played cards with his family. □

Former FIBA head Borislav Stankovic dies



In this Sunday, Aug. 22, 2010 file photo, FIBA Secretary General Emeritus Borislav Stankovic smiles before a friendly basketball match Serbia against China, in Belgrade, Serbia.

Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — Borislav Stankovic, the former longtime International Basketball Federation secretary general responsible for bringing NBA players to the Olympics, has died, the governing body said. He was 94.

Stankovic was at the helm of FIBA from 1976 to 2002 and was a member of the International Olympic Committee.

During his leadership, he was credited with working toward building bridges between East and West during the Cold War and working closely with the then-NBA Commissioner David Stern

in the late 1980s and early '90s to bring world basketball into the modern era. That resulted in American professional players participating in the top-level national team competitions, starting at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992.

For his contributions to the game, he was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1991.

FIBA Secretary General Andreas Zagklis said in a statement "as the leader of the International Basketball Federation for a quarter of a century, Borislav Stankovic will always be one of the

most important figures in the history of our sport."

As a player, he helped Red Star Belgrade win two national titles, in 1946 and 1947, and had 36 caps for Yugoslavia, including at the inaugural Basketball World Cup in 1950 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

As a coach, he captured four Yugoslav league titles and one in the Italian league.

Stankovic died in Belgrade, the Serbian capital. The cause of his death was not given.

He is survived by one daughter and two granddaughters. □



Texas Rangers minor league players Chris Seise, right, and Kevin Mendoza shake hands in greeting in the batting cages Thursday, March 12, 2020, in Surprise, Ariz.

Associated Press

Minor league advocacy group demands \$15,000 salaries

By JAKE SEINER
AP Sports Writer

A collection of former and current players have formed an advocacy group asking that Major League Baseball roughly double salaries in the minors to \$15,000 per season. Advocates for Minor Leaguers is led by Garrett Broshuis, a former pitcher and the lawyer who has represented players in lawsuits alleging minor league salaries violate minimum wage laws. The group said it "will strive to provide a collective voice for minor leaguers."

The announcement was made amid a particularly tense week for minor league players, most of whom make \$5,000-\$10,000 per season. Many have been shut out of their spring training camps due to the coronavirus pandemic, despite their reliance on those complexes for food, training facilities and often housing.

"This past week really provided an example of why this group needed to be out there," Broshuis said.

The Major League Baseball Players Association represents only those on 40-man rosters, leaving roughly 100 or more players per franchise without representation. Broshuis said Advocates for Minor Leaguers is

a nonprofit group and not a union, but he is hoping one is formed eventually, perhaps with his association's support.

Minor league hockey players have their own union, and an effort is underway to organize NBA G League players.

"Would I like to see a minor league union in the future? Yeah, I think that would be a great situation for minor league players," Broshuis said. Broshuis said the group has not reached out to MLB about its concerns. Asked how the group would get the league to take its concerns seriously, he said "it's going to be a long road" and his goal right now is to ensure "players out there to know we'll be fighting for them."

MLB responded to a request for comment by pointing to its statement Thursday announcing that minor league players would receive allowances through the previously scheduled end of spring training April 8 and that a plan was being hatched to compensate players after that during baseball's shut-down.

"MLB remains in communication with clubs on the development of an industry-wide plan for minor league player compensation from April 9th through

the beginning of the coming season," it said.

It's unclear when the minor league season will start, but players are likely to be on their own until at least May. Fans have been contributing to fundraising efforts to help. More Than Baseball, a nonprofit support group for minor leaguers, has partnered with the @adoptmlbplayer Twitter account and raised over \$6,500. Emily Waldon, a sports writer for The Athletic, said she has collected over \$10,000 for players.

Broshuis said he saw those efforts as complimentary to Advocates for Minor Leaguers' goals.

"Hopefully in the future, there won't be a need for a GoFundMe campaign just so a guy can buy diapers for his kid," he said.

The group also hopes to protect players' jobs as MLB is negotiating with the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues, the governing body of the minors, to replace the Professional Baseball Agreement that expires after the 2020 season. MLB proposed cutting 42 of the 160 required affiliated teams during those talks, a plan criticized by minor league team owners, fans and politicians. Such a move could eliminate over 1,000 roster spots. □



Texas Rangers minor league players Chris Seise, right, and Kevin Mendoza shake hands in greeting in the batting cages Thursday, March 12, 2020, in Surprise, Ariz.

Associated Press

Judge reveals he had collapsed lung, says rib improving

By MARK DIDTLER
Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — New York Yankees slugger Aaron Judge revealed he had a collapsed lung that has healed and said his broken rib is improving.

Judge had a CT scan on Friday. The Yankees announced two weeks ago that Judge had a stress fracture to his first right rib. "The bone is still about the same, slight improvement," Judge said as he left Steinbrenner Field. "The bone is healing the way it should be, so probably another test here in a couple more weeks and go from there." Judge added the scan showed a "pneumothorax came back completely gone."

"A little thing on the lung that we were having a little issue with, but that was all healed up," Judge said. "Good to go. Which means I can fly if I needed to go home."

The 27-year-old didn't play in any spring training games because of soreness in his right pectoral muscle and shoulder. With opening day pushed back into mid-May at the earliest due to the new coronavirus, Judge has more time to recover without missing games.

"That's the silver lining in all of this, just having the ability to not feel rushed trying to get back for a certain

date, especially since we really don't have a date."

Judge said "Just trying to let it heal, don't try to rush it."

Judge plans to continue working out and getting treatment at the Yankees' spring training complex.

"I got a place here, so I might as well just stay here and still work with the guys that we have as long as they don't shut us down," the California native said. "That's the biggest concern, getting shut down."

"The great thing is they have this open so we can come here and still do some baseball activity and stay ready," Judge added.

"Just kind of feel like we're still in baseball mode. But, when you go home, it's helped me out a little bit. I've got some stuff around the house to do, put up some stuff on the wall, cleaning.

But after I get all my stuff done on my apartment, I think I'm kind of going crazy a little bit."

Judge and the Yankees believe the star right fielder hurt himself making a diving catch late last season. Removal of the bone is a possibility, depending on the healing process.

Since winning the 2017 AL Rookie of the Year award, Judge has been limited to 112 games in 2018 because of a broken right wrist and to 102 games last year due to a strained left oblique. □

Continued from page 17

Not when America has nearly ground to a halt and the retirement savings of millions have taken a big hit from the stock market. Not when family members are losing their jobs and wondering not only how they're going to keep their houses but how they're going to feed their kids.

Suddenly, any display of wealth doesn't feel quite right. And as free agency began in the NFL this week the riches of the league stand in stark contrast to the turmoil in thousands of businesses and millions of households around the country.

In ordinary times the big contracts would be a good thing. Players deserve their share of the pot of gold NFL owners haul in every year and should grab all they get in the few short years they will be playing football for a living.

But these are not ordinary times, as coronavirus spreads and the daily onslaught of bleak news never seems to stop. The country is hurting, and everyone in it knows somebody who has already been affected, either by illness or financial insecurity.

A few weeks ago the thought of Drew Brees getting \$50 million for two years would have gotten shrugs



In this Nov. 24, 2019, file photo, New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees (9) gestures after a touchdown by wide receiver Michael Thomas during the second half at an NFL football game against the Carolina Panthers, in New Orleans.

Associated Press

from most and cheers from everyone in New Orleans. Now it's a reminder that payments for season tickets are due and that this might be the year that money is so tight you have to watch at home on TV instead.

The NFL has the right to carry on its business even in uncertain times, of course, and free agency signings are usually a time to build buzz ahead of the draft and the season. That hasn't changed because of the coronavirus, and the NFL still plans to go ahead with

the draft next month — just without the trappings of Las Vegas to give it real glamour.

And a big business the NFL is, certainly big enough to hand out big contracts for a long time. The league brought in more than \$18 billion in revenue last year and, with new TV contracts coming up and a new 17-game season to sell, that figure should go up even more. The league is powerful, too. In Las Vegas, where all the glittering casinos have closed and people

are hunkered down in their homes, work still goes on at the new \$1.9 billion Raiders stadium after it was declared an essential project. According to Forbes magazine, the league's 32 franchises were worth a combined \$91 billion when the most recent season began, with the average NFL franchise valued at nearly \$3 billion.

That means Jerry Jones can easily afford his new \$250 million yacht. He can also afford Dak Prescott, though there's no new long

term deal for the Cowboys quarterback yet.

Again, Prescott and his fellow players should get whatever they can. As evidenced by Jones' yacht there's plenty of money in football, and the players who actually risk their bodies should get their 47 percent — if not more — of that revenue

But on the same day minor league baseball players found out they would barely get a few hundred dollars to help pay rent while unemployed, it just didn't seem right.

Maybe that's why it felt so good to see what veteran tackle Andrew Whitworth did after signing a three-year deal to stay in Los Angeles. Whitworth and quarterback Jared Goff said they would donate \$250,000 apiece to help pay for 2 million meals with a local food bank.

"Tough times, like what we're experiencing now, really show you the true value and importance of community," Whitworth said. "We're here to wrap our arms around our hurting neighbors, let them know that they aren't forgotten, and that we are here for them." It's the right move for the right reasons.

And the best kind of message from the NFL in a week like this. □

UEFA says no name agreed for postponed Euros in 2021

NYON, Switzerland (AP) — Soccer's European Championship is now being played in 2021 though it's not yet clear what it will be officially called

"The tournament will still be known as UEFA Euro 2020," the governing body said, three days after deciding to postpone the month-long event by one year due to the coronavirus pandemic. UEFA later clarified that statement as an error and added "no decision has yet been made on the name of the rearranged Euro."

The tournament is scheduled to be played in 12 cities in different countries across Europe, with the final in London on July 11. Some cities, including St. Petersburg in Russia, already have Euro 2020 promotion-



A woman wears a medical mask walks past a sign with Euro 2020 emblem in St. Petersburg where UEFA planned to host four UEFA EURO 2020 matches, including a quarter final, in Russia, Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

Associated Press

al material on display.

"We trust that all of our ven-

ues will remain the same, ensuring the tournament

remains true to its original vision," UEFA said.

Romanian soccer and public authorities announced on Thursday they renewed all obligations for Bucharest to host three group-stage games and a Round of 16 knockout game.

UEFA picked 13 host cities in 2014 but Brussels later dropped out when a stadium construction project failed to get support from public authorities. Brussels' four games were allocated to Wembley Stadium in London. The cost of postponing the 24-team, 51-game tournament is likely to cost UEFA "hundreds of millions" of euros (dollars), its president Aleksander Ceferin said this week.

UEFA has promised refunds on any request and "will proactively contact all ticket holders in due course." □

Sports business staff grapple with coronavirus world

CHICAGO (AP) — The idea came together while Dan Migala was working on proper hand-washing techniques with his 5 1/2-year-old son, William.

William is a big NBA fan, so they talked about how he needed to wash his hands for 24 seconds like the shot clock in pro basketball. Dan then asked William about how they could teach more kids how to wash their hands, and William suggested getting a mascot involved.

Dan Migala, a longtime sports marketing executive, knew almost immediately it was an idea worth pursuing amid the coronavirus pandemic. He called his basketball clients, and an NBA team made plans to put together a video of its mascot washing its hands for its social media channels.

With the sports calendar in question more than ever before — the NBA and NHL have suspended their seasons, golf, tennis and auto racing are taking a break, and Major League Baseball isn't sure when it will get started — the sports business world is confronting several challenging issues beyond the potentially considerable loss of ticket, advertising and other forms of revenue.

It is searching for ways to stay engaged with fans without its traditional content sources. It is looking for opportunities to help its communities during traumatic times. It is preparing for what might be a completely different world whenever the games resume.

"We've never seen anything like this. Nobody has seen anything like this," Minneso-

ta Twins president Dave St. Peter said Friday in a telephone interview with the AP. "You know, sports isn't the most important thing in the world. We certainly recognize that life can go on without it. There's things that are much more important that our country, our world is dealing with.

"But I do think sports leaves a void for people and I think it'll play a really critical role in helping the world heal, but certainly in America, I think baseball will play a role in helping this country heal."

There are very few places to look for guidance. The 1989 World Series was delayed after an earthquake hit the Bay Area in Northern California. Sports hit the pause button after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Hurricane Katrina had a dramatic effect on sports in Louisiana for years after it flooded New Orleans in 2005.

Andy Dolich was the vice president of business operations for Oakland at the time of the 1989 earthquake. Asked about what lessons from that disaster might be applicable today, he emphasized the importance of coordination, communication and leadership.

"I'd also say, where you can, and I'm also starting to see it in just individuals, what can you do?" he said. "I mean life isn't normal, but we still have our televisions, we still have ability to communicate."

Sports properties have more ways to communicate with internal and external audiences than ever before, and they are using them in a variety of ways.



A bicyclist rides past T-Mobile Park, Wednesday, March 11, 2020, in Seattle, where baseball's Seattle Mariners plays home games.

Associated Press

The Boston Red Sox posted coloring sheets for fans to print out for their kids to work on at home. The Carolina Hurricanes tweeted warm messages at other NHL teams. The Charlotte Hornets shared video of center Cody Zeller learning how to play guitar. The University of Nebraska started a Husker Homework series for kids, with the first entry focusing on Eric Crouch's playing career at the school.

"From an external side of things, we've looked at it as two elements," said Garrett Klassy, a senior deputy athletic director at Nebraska. "One is how do we give back to the community during these times, and then No. 2, without sports, how do we keep everyone engaged?"

The 73-year-old Dolich, who has his own consulting firm and teaches in Stanford's school of continuing studies, said engagement is an

important focus in the absence of sporting events.

"If it was me, especially here in the Silicon Valley, I would want to have a group of the smartest people around with sort of a brainstorming session of 'OK, here's what we have. We don't know all the answers. We're going to be out of playing any games for a long time. What can we do to engage, more than we're doing now?'" Dolich said. "Whether it's virtual reality, augmented reality, et cetera. ... How can we do that, and I think there will be some breakthroughs, because people will push that."

Like pretty much every sports organization, the Twins are working on their social media plans. St. Peter said they likely will hold some town hall-style chats with team leadership and season-ticket holders or sponsors.

"It's not easy, but I also think

there's some small things you can do that I think can allow a fan to feel like they're still connected," he said.

Asked about what sports properties can do right now while the calendar is empty, Migala focused on five areas: unite the community, create smiles and remove fear, make valuable digital inventory, embrace new media and technology, and prepare for the return of games and events.

"I think you're seeing teams put a lot of focus and energy on being part of the broader solution and maybe even for a moment in time be teammates with their community," Migala, the co-founder of 4FRONT, a sports marketing firm, said, "but then also being really ready when that bounce back does occur and the return back to normal, that they're there for them." □

XFL cancels return season because of coronavirus pandemic

NEW YORK (AP) — The XFL has canceled the remainder of its return season because of the new coronavirus pandemic.

The league played five games of a 10-game regular season in eight cities. It was a revival of the XFL that played one season in 2001.

Commissioner Oliver Luck released a statement saying the

league had "no choice but to officially cancel the remainder of the 2020 season. This decision has been made with the health and safety of the entire XFL family as our top priority."

"While we are disappointed to not complete the 2020 season," Luck added, "our hearts are full of appreciation for your overwhelming

support." For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus.

Luck stressed that the XFL will be back. "When our teams return to the field, we'll make every effort to ensure your faith in us is rewarded with even more fun and excitement," he told fans.

The XFL had teams in New York, Washington, Los Angeles, Houston, Seattle, Dallas, St. Louis, and Tampa. □

Home internet jammed up? Try these steps before upgrading

By **FRANK BAJAK**
AP Technology Writer

With so much of the U.S. workforce — and their families — now cooped up at home to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus, it's not a huge surprise that home internet is showing the strain.

If you've had a business videoconference stutter while your teenagers play Call of Duty online, or found yourself unable to stream the news while your spouse uploads huge data files for work, you'll have a good idea of the problem.

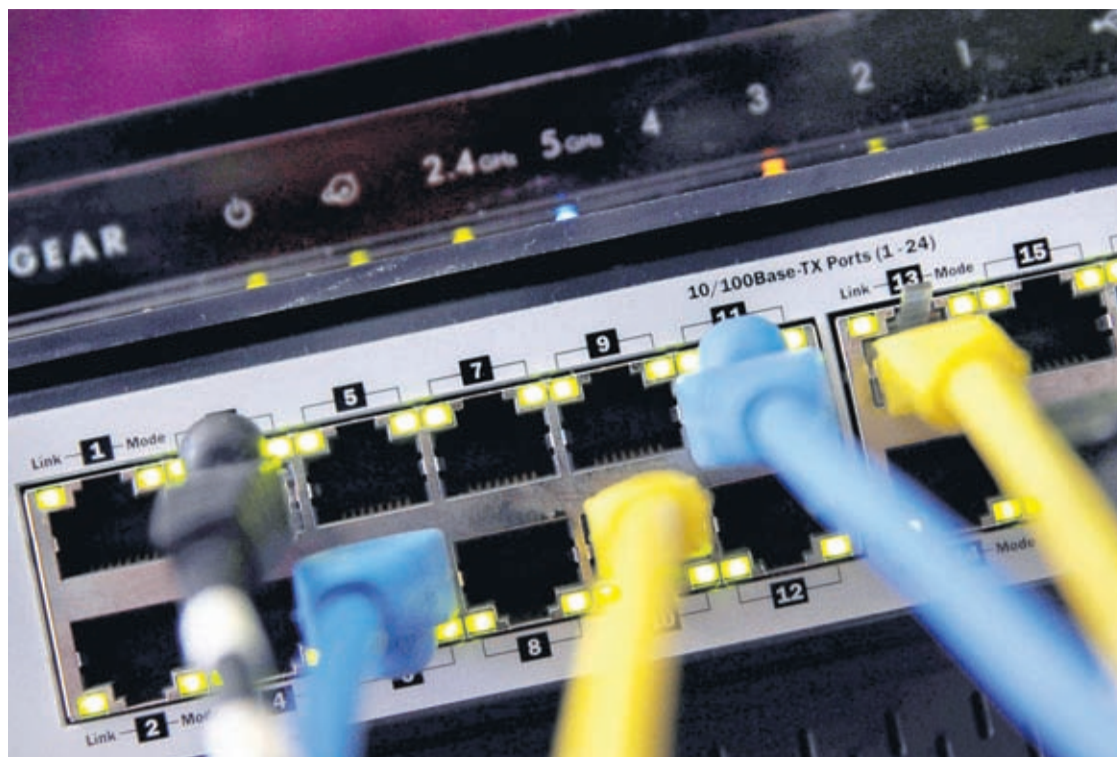
IS THERE A BANDWIDTH PROBLEM?

The internet's core is managing the spike in traffic just fine, experts say. It has massive capacity to handle Netflix, YouTube, Zoom and other streaming services.

True, Netflix has just throttled down its video quality in Europe at the request of authorities there. But the company already stores its programs on servers close to users' homes already, and there's no evidence that it's clogging networks.

IF THE INTERNET IS SO STURDY, WHY DOES MY HOME CONNECTION STUTTER?

The problem partly lies in



In this June 19, 2018, file photo, a router and internet switch are displayed in East Derry, N.H. Associated Press

the so-called "last mile," the link that connects your home to the ultra-high speed internet backbone. Most U.S. homes get their internet from cable companies and thus connect to the broader network via coaxial cable, a legacy of the cable TV era. These connections provide faster "downstream" speeds to your home than "upstream" speeds back to the inter-

net. Since videoconferencing sends equal amounts of data both ways, simultaneous sessions can clog the upstream channel and disrupt service for the entire household.

If that happens, one quick solution is to have some family members switch to audio-only, which conserves bandwidth. This also applies to anyone in multiplayer online games, where

— per a wag on Twitter — the banter between players often resemble conference calls with occasional shooting.

You could also order a service upgrade, although that might not be strictly necessary.

Some providers are temporarily offering more bandwidth, particularly for families with school-age children, in response to

the COVID-19 crisis. Others have dropped service caps that charge extra when data usage passes a certain threshold.

The relatively few U.S. households with their own direct fiber-optic connections have the same bandwidth in both directions and shouldn't experience serious hiccups.

DOES MY HOME NETWORK NEED AN UPGRADE?

It might. Start with your internet modem, the device that most likely has a coax cable connecting it to your wall. Your internet provider often rents the modem to you.

If it's several years old, it's probably time to ask your provider if upgrading the modem's internal software, or replacing the modem entirely, will help. Older modems often can't deliver the full bandwidth you're paying for to your household.

Next up is your Wi-Fi router. If you have cable, it may be built into your modem. If you haven't already, try moving it to a more central location in your home or apartment; that will ensure bandwidth is distributed more equally. □



In this March 18, 2020, photo, a maintenance worker looks at a robot outside the offices of ZhenRobotics in Beijing. Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — While other industries struggle, Liu Zhiyong says China's virus outbreak is boosting demand for his knee-high, bright yellow robots to deliver groceries and patrol malls looking for shoppers who fail to wear masks.

Liu, CEO of ZhenRobotics Corp., is among millions of entrepreneurs who are gradually getting back to

work after China declared victory over the coronavirus that shut down the world's second-largest economy. ZhenRobotics' flagship model is the six-wheeled, 68-centimeter-tall (27-inch-tall) RoboPony. The self-driving cart is sold to retailers, hospitals, malls and apartment complexes.

Unlike airlines, hotels and other industries that face a

RoboPony: Chinese robot maker sees demand surge amid virus

long and uncertain struggle to recover, Liu said his orders have tripled since the outbreak began.

"The epidemic made people aware of the fragility of human beings," Liu said.

"Robots can make up for this vulnerability and provide services people can trust," he said. "Trust in robots has been enhanced dramatically."

Robots for use in factories and consumer industries are near the top of the ruling Communist Party's wish list for technology development.

Chinese leaders see them as a profitable export and a way to make up for a shrinking workforce as the population ages.

Beijing has spent heavily

to set up robotics departments at universities and research institutes. Private sector developers can apply for research grants and other support.

ZhenRobotics, founded in 2016, does its research and development in the Chinese capital's Zhongguancun university district, a hub for tech companies. Liu said the company gets a break on rent and other official support.

Its researchers are working on technologies including machine learning, computer vision and autonomous navigation, according to Liu.

ZhenRobotics has a testing center in the southeastern province of Zhejiang, south of Shanghai. Manufactur-

ing is in Shenzhen, adjacent to Hong Kong.

One of its robots patrols Shanghai's Taikoo Hui shopping mall. It can spot customers with bare faces and remind them to put on a mask. It gives out hand sanitizer and broadcasts anti-virus information.

The RoboPony has been used by Suning.com Group Ltd., one of China's biggest retailers, to deliver food and other necessities to households during the outbreak. Demand for e-commerce soared after the government cut most access to cities with a total of 60 million people in late January. Hundreds of millions more in other areas were told stay home whenever possible. □



In this Feb. 5, 2018, file photo, the seal of the Board of Governors of the U.S. Federal Reserve System lies embedded in the floor at the Marriner S. Eccles Federal Reserve Board Building in Washington.

Associated Press

Fed to help banks purchase muni bonds to keep credit flowing

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER**
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve said it would seek to hold down spiking interest rates in the state and municipal bond markets by supporting banks' purchase of the bonds.

The Fed said Friday that it would loan money to banks that banks would then use to purchase highly-rated muni bonds from money market mutual funds or from muni bond funds. The goal is to stabilize the \$3.8 trillion muni bond market and ensure states and cities and other public entities, including hospitals, can borrow at low cost. Without the ability to borrow, local and state governments could be forced to lay off workers.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston is conducting the transactions and is doing so by expanding the Money Market Mutual Fund Liquidity Facility, an emergency program it launched Wednesday. The Fed has launched three emergency lending programs, all of which are intended to provide a source of borrowing to panicked financial markets, as investors and businesses increasingly stockpile cash and sell securities. The MMLF was first used

during the 2008 financial crisis, but its expansion to include muni bonds is a new step that wasn't taken back then.

States and cities are facing a looming cash crunch as revenue from sales taxes and other taxes are likely to fall sharply in the coming weeks and months. At the same time, many public institutions are facing higher costs, particularly hospitals and other health programs. The Fed has in the past come under criticism from Democrats in Congress for not using its emergency lending powers to assist struggling local governments. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi asked Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell on Tuesday to consider doing so. The Fed says its action Friday was in response to turmoil in financial markets.

Also Friday, the Fed said it would expand its currency exchanges with five central banks, including by providing week-long exchanges, or currency swaps, every day rather than once a week.

The Fed provides dollars to overseas central banks because some business is conducted overseas in dollars and foreign banks also provide dollar-denominated loans to their customers. □



This Wednesday, April 3, 2019, file photo shows a box filled with dollar bills, in New York.

Associated Press

Filthy lucre: Paper money shunned for fear of virus spread

By **KEN SWEET**

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In a world suffering a pandemic, cash is no longer king.

A growing number of businesses and individuals worldwide have stopped using banknotes in fear that physical currency, handled by tens of thousands of people over their useful life, could be a vector for the spreading coronavirus.

Public officials and health experts have said that the risk of transferring the virus person-to-person through the use of banknotes is small. But that has not stopped businesses from refusing to accept currency and some countries from urging their citizens to stop using banknotes altogether.

Open Books, a non-profit bookstore in Chicago, sent an email to customers last week asking individuals not to use cash.

A chain of diners in Washington State has also stopped accepting cash. And delivery services like Grubhub, Door Dash, and others have instituted "no contact" deliveries, and have either stopped offering cash as a payment option or are actively discouraging it.

Experts say cash does carry a risk of transmitting the vi-

rus, but the risk from cash so far is small compared with other transmission routes. A scientific paper published early in the outbreak found the virus can live on cardboard for up to 24 hours and up to three days on plastic and stainless steel. The researchers, however, did not test whether it can live on banknote paper.

The presence of live virus particles on banknotes does not mean they are a health hazard, public health experts said. Virus particles are unlikely to return to the air, or aerosolize, once on a surface.

"It's not impossible that there might be traces of virus on dollar bills but if you wash your hands it should provide adequate protections, you shouldn't need anything else," said Julie Fischer, a professor at the Center for Global Health Science and Society at Georgetown University, on C-SPAN.

Other devices used to pay for items are just as likely to be vectors for disease transfer. Credit and debit cards are made of plastic and metal. ATMs are touched by hundreds of human hands a day. And there have been studies that show smartphones are heavily contaminated with bacteria because of their

constant use.

Even the Federal Reserve has taken efforts to make sure the money supply is not contaminated. Banknotes that circulated in Europe and Asia are being quarantined for seven to 10 days as a "precautionary measure," according to a Federal Reserve spokesperson.

While businesses are discouraging cash usage, there have been reports of customers making large withdrawals from ATMs in several parts of the country. Some banks have had to order additional cash from the Fed or keep ATMs stocked at higher levels to allow larger customer withdrawals.

Banknote avoidance is not just happening in the U.S. In South Korea, which has been more successful in stemming the outbreak, the country's central bank took all banknotes out of circulation for two weeks or, in some cases, burned paper money.

The National Bank of Poland said Thursday on Twitter that "Polish banknotes are subjected to a quarantine" and are therefore safe to use in cash transactions. The bank did not respond to a request sent Friday for more details about how that works. □

Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

		8		4		2		
	1		6		8		9	
9								4
	8				7			
4			7					9
	2						8	
7								2
	4		7	3		6		
		2		5		1		

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

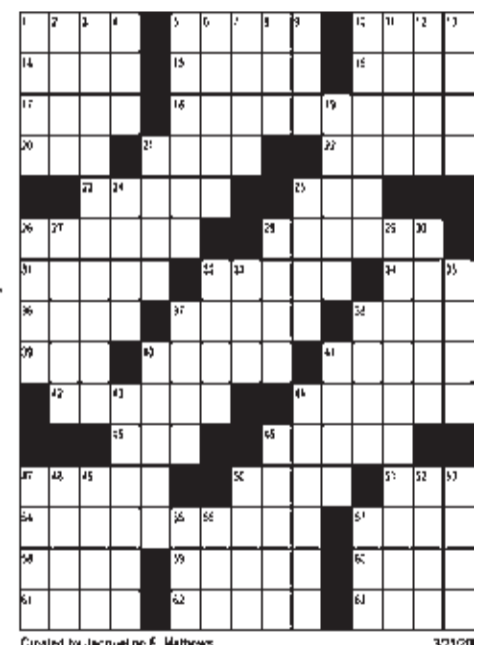
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

8	6	7	5	4	1	3	2	9
3	4	5	2	9	8	7	1	6
1	9	2	3	7	6	5	4	8
5	7	6	4	3	9	1	8	2
9	8	1	6	5	2	4	3	7
4	2	3	8	1	7	9	6	5
7	5	8	1	2	4	6	9	3
2	1	9	7	6	3	8	5	4
6	3	4	9	8	5	2	7	1

ACROSS

- 1 Letters on an invitation
- 5 Divide
- 10 Twisted; askew
- 14 Tug-of-war item
- 15 By yourself
- 16 Cracker topper
- 17 Past one's prime
- 18 Guzzles' game
- 20 Kiting's Gunga
- 21 Ready to be taken out of the oven
- 22 Opposite of attract
- 23 Indiana's Term
- 25 and don'ts, rules to follow
- 26 Sunglasses
- 28 Pie bottoms
- 31 Panama or Suez
- 32 Skirt fold
- 34 Ewe's mate
- 36 Actor Griffin
- 37 Incorrect
- 38 2 and 3 and 4
- 39 Sock cat
- 40 Peplu ill
- 41 Cutlery & canoes
- 42 Local's
- 44 Steam baths
- 45 up in years
- 46 Sure; absolute certainty
- 47 Jack could eat no fat
- 50 Short-necked duck
- 51 Tree, cornered
- 54 Middle-of-the-road
- 57 Cripety
- 58 Fairy tale opener
- 59 Sicker than before
- 60 Physical fit
- 61 First, reverse or neutral
- 62 up, adjoined
- 63 Aggravates



Created by Jacqueline E. Matthews

3/21/20

Friday's Puzzle Solved

S	N	A	P	F	L	O	P	D	R	A	B
L	O	C	A	L	L	I	N	E	R	A	J
U	N	C	L	E	I	D	E	N	T	I	C
G	E	E	E	S	E	V	E	R	E		
	L	O	W	E	R	I	R	E			
A	R	E	N	A	S	H	O	R	R	I	D
S	U	R	L	I	S	A	U	N	A	M	O
A	D	A	Y	S	E	R	B	S	S	P	U
N	E	T	R	O	A	M	S	L	O	O	S
R	E	P	A	Y	S		W	O	R	S	E
	H	I	S	R	I	O	T	S			
I	M	P	A	L	A	I	N	K	I	D	O
R	E	A	S	S	U	R	E	S		E	B
O	N	C	E	C	A	V	E	R	U	L	E
N	U	T	S	E	W	E	S	T	E	D	S

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3/21/20

DOWN

- 1 Actor Game
- 2 Serra or Bear
- 3 Generous
- 4 Col or coin
- 5 Wooden shoes
- 6 LAX arrival
- 7 Vesp ace
- 8 Squid's secretion
- 9 Peg for Nicklaus
- 10 Convent succener
- 11 up; bring to an end
- 12 Irritate
- 13 Shoul
- 19 Freshwater fish
- 21 One-on-one combat
- 24 Rome wasn't built in
- 25 Tow along behind
- 26 'Away with you'
- 27 Asian capital city
- 28 Coin worth very little
- 29 Shaped like a slice of pizza
- 30 Monica CA
- 32 Paid athletes
- 33 Spanish article
- 35 Disney
- 37 Put in a good for, recommend
- 38 Part of speech
- 40 Clothing accessories
- 41 Defense attorney's request
- 43 Borrowed car
- 44 Humiliated
- 46 Razz
- 47 Ar potation
- 48 Transcarent; rectangle
- 49 San José Costa
- 50 Maine bird
- 52 Pres. James K
- 53 Gorillas & gibbons
- 55 Smallest even number
- 56 Argument
- 57 Tall, manual art, occur with seniors

Stores set up senior shopping hours amid coronavirus fears

By DENISE LAVOIE
Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — As senior citizens deal with anxiety about the coronavirus, grocery store chains and other retailers have come up with a way to ease their fears: shopping times reserved exclusively for them.

Target, Whole Foods, Walmart and Dollar General, as well as supermarkets in Europe, began dedicating early morning shopping times for older customers this week. The theory is that allowing seniors to shop among smaller crowds could reduce their chances of acquiring the virus and give them first crack at buying hand sanitizer and other products that have been hard to find because of panic shopping.

The idea seems to have worked well in smaller shops but backfired in some larger stores, where big crowds made "social distancing" difficult.

"If you didn't have coronavirus before you got there, you probably do now," said Roger Glenn Miller, 82, after he showed up Thursday morning at a Stop & Shop grocery store in North Providence, Rhode Island, along with about 200 other seniors.

Don Gregson, 81, had a similar experience at the same Stop & Shop. Gregson said he expected to shop with a small group of seniors but instead found aisles crowded with people.

When he saw the number of people in the store, Gregson slipped on a surgical mask he carries in his pocket, then bought 4 gallons (15 liters) of distilled water for the machine he needs for sleep apnea.

"I'm sure they were trying to do the right thing, but somehow the planning went astray," he said.

The Massachusetts-based chain, which is offering the special shopping time for seniors every day, said in a statement that it is asking its customers to consider stag-



Shoppers wait in line to enter a Stop & Shop supermarket during hours open daily only for seniors Thursday, March 19, 2020, in North Providence, R.I.

Associated Press

gering the days they shop "to ensure a less crowded environment, as well as for everyone to exercise caution and social distancing while shopping."

Ernest Hodge, 72, had a much smoother experience at a Dollar General store just north of Richmond. Hodge showed up at 8 a.m. sharp Wednesday, wearing a face mask and blue rubber gloves to protect himself. He was able to shop among just a half-dozen other seniors and got most of what he needed, including disinfecting wipes, spray cleaner and bottled water.

Hodge said he was happy when he heard about the special shopping hours because he is trying to limit his exposure to people.

"I get off work, I go home. I don't come out again unless it's a must," he said.

Dollar General is reserving the first hour of shopping every day for seniors at its more than 16,000 stores. Target has set aside an hour every Wednesday morning for vulnerable shoppers, including the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions. Walmart said it will host an hourlong "senior shopping event" every Tuesday for customers 60 and older, one hour before stores open to the general public.

In South Africa, the supermarket chain Pick n Pay said this week that it will open all its markets an

hour early every Wednesday for shoppers over 65. And Sainsbury's, one of the largest supermarket chains in the United Kingdom, reserved the first hour of shopping in its stores Thursday for elderly and other vulnerable customers.

Jim Gibson, 72, from Crofton Park, southeast London, went to his local superstore in Bell Green, where he said he had a "relatively trauma-free" experience except for the fact that some younger shoppers appeared to ignore the request to reserve the hour for senior citizens. Most of the products he was looking for were there, though many canned items were "leaping off the shelves" and he couldn't get the medicines that he and his 73-year-old wife want "for love or money."

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of

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U.S. virus testing faces new headwind: Lab supply shortages

By **MATTHEW PERRONE**

WASHINGTON (AP) — First, some of the coronavirus tests didn't work. Then there weren't enough to go around. Now, just as the federal government tries to ramp up nationwide screening, laboratory workers are warning of a new roadblock: dire shortages of testing supplies.

The shortages are the latest stumble in a botched effort to track the spread of coronavirus that has left the U.S. weeks behind many other developed countries. Dwindling supplies include both chemical components and basic swabs needed to collect patient samples.

There are "acute, serious shortages across the board" for supplies needed to do the tests, said Eric Blank, of the Association of Public Health Laboratories, which represents state and local health labs.

Blank said government labs in the U.S. are competing for supplies with larger commercial labs and governments around the world. In conference calls this week with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, some lab staff warned that they may have to shut down testing within days due to lack of components, Blank said. Wide scale testing is a critical part of tracking and containing infectious diseases like COVID-19. But the U.S. effort has been plagued by a series of missteps, including accuracy problems with tests the CDC sent to other labs and bureaucratic hurdles that slowed the entrance of large, private sector labs. With the virus spreading, officials in the U.S. have shifted focus from tracking the virus to extraordinary measures to blunt its damage.



In this Wednesday, March 11, 2020 file photo, a technician prepares COVID-19 coronavirus patient samples for testing at a laboratory in New York's Long Island.

Associated Press

On Thursday California's governor told its 40 million residents to stay home indefinitely and venture outside only for essential jobs. But public health experts stress that policymakers are "flying blind" in deciding how to manage the pandemic.

"The only way to get through it without testing is to keep the entire country quarantined for the next 18 months" said Dr. Ashish Jha, a Harvard University global health professor. "That obviously is untenable."

Jha and his colleagues say the U.S. should be screening 100,000 to 150,000 people per day. The current rate is roughly 20,000 per day, he estimates, though it is accelerating as larger commercial companies ramp up testing.

The director of Missouri's state lab said Friday that his facility is facing shortages

of swabs, liquids to store patient samples and kits to develop the results. Many labs are having similar problems, said Bill Whitmar. "Quite frankly, 95% to 98% of the talk between lab directors has been about the shortage of supplies," Whitmar said.

At this point only 500 swabs are available. And the lab only has supplies to last through Tuesday, he reported.

The Jefferson City lab does only a fraction of the coronavirus testing performed in Missouri, with commercial labs now doing the largest share. But Whitmar's lab is where tests are run on the people most likely to be infected in that state.

The shortages have become a central concern in increasingly urgent communications among governors and federal officials.

"Most of my phone calls today have been about swabs," Gov. Gina Raimondo said during a Tuesday news conference. "That's our big issue at the moment."

The Trump administration's top health official suggested Friday that the "anecdotal" reports of shortages are caused by confusion about how to find alterna-

tive supplies.

"Usually it's that the lab people do not understand that there are alternative supplies in the marketplace that they are perfectly free to use," Azar told reporters in a briefing at the White House. He said the federal government is purchasing and shipping swabs to states.

Whitmar, the Missouri lab director, said many suppliers just don't have the products in stock.

"An order is not a swab in hand," he said.

The coronavirus test uses a chemical chain reaction to detect tiny traces of the virus' genetic material and reproduce it many times. State and local health labs follow the technique first developed by the CDC, which calls for a specific genetic kit made by German diagnostic firm Qiagen. Labs around the globe are reporting shortage of those kits.

Qiagen said this week it is trying to boost production from normal levels, which are capable of testing 1.5 million patients per month, to amounts that would allow for testing more than 10 million patients by the end of June.

The World Health Organiza-

tion has instructed countries to "test, test, test" to track and isolate those carrying the virus. But the evolving message from U.S. decision-makers acknowledges that many suspected cases will likely go untested.

The White House has increasingly emphasized that testing should prioritize the elderly and health care workers who have symptoms of the virus. While most cases of COVID-19 are mild and tens of thousands of people have recovered, older people and those with underlying health problems are at higher risk for more serious problems, such as pneumonia.

"We don't want everyone to go out and get a test because there's no reason for it," President Donald Trump told reporters in a briefing Friday. (Two weeks ago, Trump declared "anybody who wants a test can get a test." But his deputies later walked back that statement.)

The CDC tells people to seek testing if they have certain symptoms of the flu-like illness caused by the coronavirus – fever, cough and trouble breathing – and if they have traveled recently to an outbreak area or have been in close contact with someone who is infected. They should first be tested for the flu and other routine infections.

While doctors are supposed to decide who ultimately gets tested, many state labs have adjusted their guidelines depending on testing availability.

The Trump administration is expected to soon announce the rollout of nearly 50 community-based testing centers around the country, including drive-thru sites.

Some experts worry the introduction of convenient, mass screening will divert supplies from people with severe symptoms to those who face lower risks.

"It's taking supplies that are already in very short supply away from the testing laboratories that are doing necessary testing," said Blank, of the public health labs association. □

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Met Opera cancels season, stops pay of orchestra, chorus

By RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The Metropolitan Opera is canceling the rest of its season and stopping the pay of the orchestra, chorus and other unionized employees at the end of March due to the new coronavirus.

The Met last week called off performances through March 31.

Met general manager Peter Gelb said he is giving up his \$1.45 million salary until normal operations resume and higher-paid members of his administrative staff are having their pay reduced — by 10% for everyone earning more than \$125,000 and by 25%-50% at the top of the pay scale. The Met is launching an emergency fundraising drive of \$50 million to \$60 million and has obtained pledges from its board for \$11 million of that.

"We have significant cash-flow issues that we have to deal with right now because of the loss of the box office," Gelb said in an interview. "We're also at the same time encouraging ticket buyers to donate their tickets rather than take refunds or at least put their money on account so we can hold onto it and re-



This March 12, 2020 file photo shows a few people at Josie Robertson Plaza in front of The Metropolitan Opera house, background center, at Lincoln Center in New York.

Associated Press

assign it to a future performance."

With a \$308 million budget this season, the Met is the largest performing-arts institution in the U.S. Its season was to have ended May 9, and its 2020-21 season opens Sept. 21. The crisis forced cancellation of about one-third of the season and three high-definition telecasts to movie theaters around the world.

The American Guild of Musical Artists, which rep-

resents the chorus and singers, viewed the Met's step as mandatory unpaid leave rather than layoffs since no artist contracts will be canceled.

Health care coverage for employees who receive it through the Met will continue, a decision praised by AMGA and Local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians, which represents the orchestra. Still, AGMA said in a statement "it's simply not enough dur-

ing this pandemic."

"Our artists are facing a scary and uncertain future," AGMA said. "They depend on performance and rehearsal fees to survive and they are out of work indefinitely."

Local 802 said orchestra members and their families "are now facing the prospect of no income for an extended period of time. We believe that immediate governmental assistance is essential to avoid a brutal

outcome for these musicians."

Technical rehearsals for next season's new productions will be compromised, Gelb said. The chorus usually returns to the Met at the start of August and the orchestra right after Labor Day.

The Met, citing force majeure, is not paying individual singers for canceled performances.

"In the history of theater and opera, in force majeure situations, artists who are very well compensated, such as those who perform at the Met, do not get paid. That's why their contracts are written in such a fashion," Gelb said. "That does not mean that we are not sympathetic and supportive of them. For the Met to be able to come back and be a house they are able to perform in in the fall, it has to be strong and has to survive."

The Lyric Opera of Chicago, which called off its highly anticipated presentation of Wagner's Ring Cycle, is paying the singers 10%, the company said. The Atlanta Opera, a smaller regional company, paid its cast for the two canceled performances of "Porgy and Bess." □

Plácido Domingo resigns from opera union, donates \$500,000

By JOCELYN GECKER

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Superstar Plácido Domingo has resigned from the U.S. union that represents opera singers and will contribute \$500,000 to sexual harassment eradication programs and a fund that helps opera employees in crisis, the union said Friday. The development came weeks after investigations by the American Guild of Musical Artists and Los Angeles Opera found sexual harassment allegations against the famed tenor, now 79, to be credible.

The investigations were launched after the publication of Associated Press stories last year in which multiple women accused Domingo of harassment and abusing his power

while he held management positions at LA Opera and Washington National Opera.

AGMA announced that its four-month investigation found Domingo had "engaged in inappropriate activity, ranging from flirtation to sexual advances, in and outside of the workplace." Details of the allegations were not released, but people familiar with the investigation who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity said investigators found 27 people were sexually harassed or had witnessed inappropriate behavior by Domingo in the 1990s and 2000s.

LA Opera said its investigators had received 10 accusations that Domingo engaged in "inappropriate

conduct" with women between 1986 and 2019. Domingo helped found the LA Opera in the 1980s and led the company as general director from 2003 until last October, when he stepped down after the allegations surfaced.

In announcing Domingo's resignation, AGMA also said the union had withdrawn disciplinary charges filed against singer as a result of its investigation. Disciplinary action could have ranged from fines to expulsion.

Union officials contacted by the AP said they had no additional comment, and Domingo's representative did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The opera world has ef-



In this July 12, 2019 file photo, opera singer Plácido Domingo speaks during a news conference about an upcoming show in Madrid, Spain.

Associated Press

fectively been shut by the coronavirus pandemic, which has halted travel and led companies across the globe to close theaters indefinitely, leaving much of

the industry unemployed. The union has encouraged members affected by the crisis to apply for financial assistance to its relief fund. □

TV med shows donate masks, Cannes delayed amid coronavirus

By The Associated Press undefined

From finding ways to help others cope to sheltering in place to canceling events, here's a look at some of the ways the entertainment industry is reacting to the spread of the coronavirus, which most people recover from but can cause severe illness in the elderly and those with preexisting medical conditions.

MASKS FROM DRAMAS BRING REAL RELIEF

They may only play doctors on TV, but they're giving real-life help to hospitals that have taken a hit from the coronavirus outbreak.

The Fox TV medical series "The Resident" has donated some of its on-set masks and gowns to a hospital in Atlanta, where it shoots, and the ABC show "The Good Doctor" is moving to do the same in its home base of Vancouver, Canada.

"To the entire team @theresidentonfox, thank you for this incredibly generous donation of #PPE from your set, including gowns, masks, gloves, and all the things our healthcare workers need to provide safe care for our community during #COVID19," Dr. Karen Law of Grady Memorial Hospital said on Instagram, along with a photo of boxes of the donated gear.

Show representatives confirmed that the gear came from them, and representatives of "The Good Doctor" said they were in talks with government officials in Vancouver about what is needed at hospitals there. "I had a serious discussion with the residents about how, though supplies are low, a magical shipment of masks is unlikely to arrive," Law said. "And yet, a magical shipment of masks DID arrive, in the form of this very generous gesture."

The coronavirus has especially hit home for "The Good Doctor." Actor Daniel Dae Kim, who is a producer on the show and appeared in several episodes last year, says he has tested positive for it.

Kim said in an Instagram



This image released by ABC shows a scene from "The Good Doctor."

Associated Press

video from his house in Hawaii that while flying home from a shoot in New York — where he was playing a doctor helping with a flu pandemic — he noticed an itch in his throat, followed by a tightness in his chest and body aches that prompted him to get tested.

Kim says he was not hospitalized, and began feeling better within a few days.

"I'm not 100 percent, but I'm close," he said.

CANNES CAN'T GO ON AS PLANNED

France's Cannes Film Festival has joined the long list of prestigious events delayed by the coronavirus pandemic. The 73rd edition of cinema's storied annual gathering will not take place from May 12 to 23 as planned.

Organizers had for days held out on delaying the festival on the French Riviera, but finally relented Thursday and say they're considering moving it to the end of June or the beginning of July.

The pandemic has started to affect events in the summer as well, with the Daytime Emmy Awards announcing Thursday that they were canceling their

June ceremony.

"There are just too many unknowns right now, not the least of which is whether we would actually be permitted to stage an event in June" involving more than 1,000 participants, National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Chairman Terry O'Reilly wrote in a letter to members.

The Daytime Emmy Awards had been scheduled for June 12-14 in California.

MINIONS MOVIE DELAYED

Even if movie theaters are open this summer, "Minions: The Rise of Gru" will not be hitting its planned July release date. Universal Pictures says Thursday that the animated film will not be completed by July 3 due to circumstances surrounding the coronavirus.

Chris Meledandri, the founder and CEO of Illumination, says in a statement that Illumination is closing its Paris studio due to the severity of the situation in France. Meledandri says they are abiding by the recommendations of the French government.

ROSIE BRINGS HER FRIENDS FOR HELP

Rosie O'Donnell is reviving her old daytime talk show

for one time only — and her guest list is impressive.

A who's-who of Broadway and Hollywood — including Matthew Broderick and Sarah Jessica Parker, Neil Patrick Harris, Morgan Freeman, Gloria Estefan and Barry Manilow — plan to join O'Donnell on Sunday for a live streaming "The Rosie O'Donnell Show" as a fundraiser for The Actors Fund.

The show will be available at Broadway.com and livestreamed on Broadway.com's YouTube channel. It starts at 7 p.m. Eastern.

Others expected to show up include: Sebastian Arceles, Stephanie J. Block, Tituss Burgess, Norbert Leo Butz, Kristin Chenoweth, Gavin Creel, Darren Criss, Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Harvey Fierstein, David Foster, Megan Hilty, Judith Light, Rob McClure, Audra McDonald, Katharine McPhee, Alan Menken, Idina Menzel, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Kelli O'Hara, Ben Platt, Billy Porter, Andrew Rannells, Chita Rivera, Seth Rudetsky, Lea Salonga, Jordin Sparks, Ben Vereen and Adrienne Warren.

ORCHESTRA QUIET

The Metropolitan Opera in New York City is canceling

the rest of its season and stopping pay of the orchestra, chorus and other unionized employees at the end of March due to the new coronavirus.

The Met last week canceled performances through March 31.

Met general manager Peter Gelb said he is giving up his \$1.45 million salary until normal operations resume and higher-paid members of his administrative staff are having their pay reduced, by 10% for everyone earning more than \$125,000 and by 25-50% at the top of the pay scale. The Met is launching an emergency fundraising drive of \$50 million to \$60 million and has obtained pledges from its board for \$11 million of that.

"We have significant cash-flow issues that we have to deal with right now because of the loss of the box office," Gelb said in an interview. "We're also at the same time encouraging ticket buyers to donate their tickets rather than take refunds or at least put their money on account so we can hold onto it and reassign it to a future performance."

With a \$308 million budget this season, the Met is the largest performing-arts institution in the U.S. Its season was to have ended May 9, and its 2020-21 season opens Sept. 21. The crisis forced cancellation of about one-third of the season and three high-definition telecasts to movie theaters around the world.

CONAN O'BRIEN WILL TRY TO RETURN TO LATE NIGHT WITH AN IPHONE

With iPhones and Skype, Conan O'Brien is going back on the air.

The late-night host said he will resume putting out new episodes of TBS' "Conan" on March 30. His staff will remain at home, and the show will be cobbled together with O'Brien on an iPhone and guests via Skype.

"This will not be pretty, but feel free to laugh at our attempt," said O'Brien on Twitter. □

Netflix establishes \$100 million virus relief fund

By LYNN ELBER
AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Netflix said Friday it is establishing a \$100 million relief fund for workers in the worldwide creative community affected by the coronavirus-caused halt of most film and television production. "This community has supported Netflix through the good times, and we want to help them through these hard times, especially while governments are still figuring out what economic support they will provide," Ted Sarandos, Netflix's chief creative officer, said in a statement.

The majority of the fund will support hard-hit crews on Netflix's own productions around the world, Sarandos said, and will supplement the two weeks of pay the company already agreed to pay the cast and crew on suspended productions. Electricians, carpenters and drivers, who largely are paid hourly wages and work on a project-to-project basis, are among the hundreds of thousands in



This June 24, 2015, file photo, shows the Netflix Apple TV app icon, in South Orange, N.J.

Associated Press

the entertainment industry without jobs, he said. More than 120,000 jobs have been lost by members of IATSE, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees that represents cinematographers, editors, production designers and others, according

to The Hollywood Reporter. The publication cited correspondence to members from the International Cinematographers Guild and Motion Picture Editors Guild.

In an effort to support the broader film and television industry, \$15 million of the

Netflix fund will be distributed to "third parties and nonprofits providing emergency relief to out-of-work crew and cast in the countries where we have a large production base," according to Sarandos' statement. In the U.S. and Canada, Netflix said it will donate \$1

million each to the SAG-AFTRA Covid-19 Disaster Fund, the Motion Picture and Television Fund and the Actors Fund Emergency Assistance in the United States, and \$1 million between the Fondation des Artistes and the AFC, formerly known as the Actors' Fund of Canada.

Elsewhere, including Europe, Latin America and Asia, Netflix is coordinating with industry organizations to create similar relief efforts, Sarandos said, with announcements planned next week on funding those efforts.

"What's happening is unprecedented," he said. "We are only as strong as the people we work with and Netflix is fortunate to be able to help those hardest hit in our industry through this challenging time."

Efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus have left the entertainment industry reeling, with the suspension of most productions, closures of movie theaters and Broadway plays and concert postponements. □

The Grand Ole Opry to play on in an empty theater

By KRISTIN M. HALL
AP Entertainment Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The Grand Ole Opry, the longest running radio show in history, is playing on through the coronavirus outbreak by returning to its roots.

The country music institution, which has been airing Saturday nights for 94 years, is set to broadcast live on television this week in front of an empty venue. The show was originally aired without a live audience in its early days in 1925 on WSM, the AM station in Nashville, Tennessee, that still airs the radio broadcast every Saturday.

Normally the show is performed live in front of an audience of about 4,400 people at its current home, the Opry House, but the coronavirus forced the Opry to close its doors to the public last Saturday while the radio broadcast

continued. This Saturday, country artists Brad Paisley, Vince Gill and Marty Stuart will perform acoustically to an empty theater, but the show will air live on television.

The performance will air on the Circle, a network that is a joint venture between the Opry Entertainment Group and Gray Television. Fans can also watch the performance on the Opry's YouTube page.

Stuart, a Grand Ole Opry member, will be playing by himself on stage with just his guitar and mandolin, without the Opry's normal backing band.

"We are at a point in the nation (when) people need hope," Stuart told The Associated Press. "They need something to take their minds off what the news is telling us every time we turn on the news."

That's what country music does. It was made for Sat-

urday night."

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. Dan Rogers, vice president and executive producer of the Opry, said it is following safe distance recommendations among the crew and artists to prevent the spread of the virus and cleaning the venue and equipment as recommended by health officials. The Opry is believed to only have canceled one Saturday night performance in its history — in 1968 when the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis caused the city of Nashville to impose



This undated file photo shows The Grand Ole Opry, the longest continuously running radio show in the world, at the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

a curfew. The Opry continued broadcasting even after the Opry House was flooded in 2010.

"Country music has been thought to be universal," Rogers said. "And these days, this problem that

we're all in the middle of now is universal as well. So hopefully we can touch a lot of a people. Maybe someone will laugh Saturday night. Maybe somebody will hear a lyric that really connects with them." □

National parks are free, but some oppose that amid the virus

By **BRADY McCOMBS and JAMES ANDERSON**

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Most national parks are open as a refuge for Americans tired of being stuck at home during a pandemic, but despite now being free to visit, people may find it more difficult to enjoy them as parks close visitor centers, shuttles, lodges and restaurants to fight the spread of the coronavirus. Parks are trying to keep up with ever-changing rules and recommendations from government officials who are urging people to avoid gathering in large groups but allowing them to get outside for fresh air and exercise as long as they keep away from others.

The National Park Service says it's adhering to the latest guidelines from the White House and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, vowing to keep outdoor spaces open while giving park superintendents the power to close or modify operations.

Interior Secretary David Bernhardt this week temporarily waived entrance fees at national parks, monuments and wildlife refuges to make it easier for people to get outdoors and "implement some social distancing."

"Getting out into the wilderness is perfect for what we call the 'shack nasties' — being cooped up inside your home," said Trish Jacob, an employee of a backcountry guiding company near Rocky Mountain National Park.

But not everyone is on board with the idea of people descending on parks and their gateway towns to escape the virus.

Making parks free will lead to overcrowding and put staffers and visitors at greater risk of being exposed to the virus, according to a group representing park service employees.

"It is irresponsible to urge people to visit national park sites when gathering at other public spaces is no longer considered safe," said Phil Francis, chairman of the Coalition to Protect



Snowshoers head up a slope above Paradise at Mount Rainier National Park, Wednesday, March 18, 2020, in Washington state.

Associated Press

America's National Parks. A hospital in Moab, Utah, also has implored state officials to slow the flow of people coming to see the red rocks and unique formations at Arches and Canyonlands national parks over fears the facility couldn't handle an outbreak. In response, officials this week limited hotel stays to people in town for work and banned dining in restaurants.

Nationally, parks are devising ways to stay open while keeping people safely apart and trying to ensure employees stay healthy. Many closed visitor centers, museums and entrance booths while rangers are stationed outside to field visitors' questions.

Though rangers are working, some parks warned people to be extra cautious, especially in places with wintry weather, because resources are strained amid the pandemic and rescues may be more difficult.

Zion National Park in southern Utah halted shuttles used by most people visiting its red rock vistas nestled in a narrow canyon. Tourists now must wait for limited parking to free up. Grand

Canyon National Park also stopped its shuttles and closed its restaurants. In Northern California, visitor centers at several destinations managed by the park service, such as Muir Woods National Monument, Alcatraz Island and the Golden Gate Bridge, are closed. Yosemite National Park closed its campgrounds.

Chris Brunell, who spent most of the past three weeks camping in Yosemite, said he was told he had to pack up and leave Thursday, two days earlier than he expected.

Brunell, who was laid off from a Silicon Valley technology job before the outbreak, said the park emptied noticeably after lodging and restaurants closed Tuesday.

"Compared to the usual numbers, it's just a trickle," he said.

Yellowstone National Park, Mount Rainier National Park in Washington state and Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado also closed facilities. Most amenities and roads in Yellowstone — which spans parts of Wyoming, Montana and Idaho — and Rainier normally are closed this time

of year because of deep snow. The Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island in New York are closed entirely.

Workers at Grand Canyon have shifted away from duties that put them close to tourists.

"We're just coming up with different ways for them to do their jobs that's mindful of the CDC guidelines," park spokeswoman Lily Daniels said.

For most people, the coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms. But for the elderly and people with existing conditions, it can cause more severe illness. The vast majority of those who are infected recover.

In Utah, the hospital's concerns are over the social interactions at hotels, bars, restaurants and often crowded trailheads or entrance gates. Expecting thousands of tourists in the city this weekend, Moab Regional Hospital executives urged the governor to ban visitors. But tourists have only been prohibited from staying at hotels.

"We're just encouraging people stay home and stay in their residences and to wait out this two weeks and

hopefully things will return to some kind of normal," said Elaine Gizler, executive director of the Moab Area Travel Council.

In Rocky Mountain National Park, Katarina Takahashi of Longmont, Colorado, trudged through fresh snow during a three-hour hike to Emerald Lake, passing other alpine lakes surrounded by towering peaks. She called the 3-mile (5-kilometer) trek last week a much-needed escape.

"It's a very refreshing time to be outdoors, to get the health benefits of exercising, be in the sunshine, and get away as well from the anxiety I've felt, that we're all feeling, about the virus," said Takahashi, a 32-year-old freelance Japanese language translator who blogs about the outdoors.

Businesses in Estes Park, a gateway town that relies heavily on Rocky Mountain National Park, are watching virus developments warily.

"We are open for business until the city tells us otherwise," said Jacob, who works for Kirk Mountain Adventures, which offers snowshoeing, fly fishing, hiking, backpacking and other excursions into the park. Kirk employees were leading snowshoeing and fly fishing trips this week — each limited to three people, not because of the virus but because many visitors want a more intimate experience in nature. But spring break business is slightly down, Jacob said.

Like its Moab counterpart, the Estes Park Chamber of Commerce is focusing more on helping its members deal with the virus than promoting tourism. The town's already been hit by a statewide ban on dining at restaurants and bars. If there's any silver lining, it may be better that the first shock waves from the coronavirus are hitting now, rather than during the peak summer season, chamber executive director Keith Pearson said.

"By Memorial Day, if the worst can be in the rear-view mirror, that would be fantastic," Pearson said. □